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Maestría en Lengua Inglesa y Lingüística Aplicada

DESIGNING AND PILOTING PART OF AN INTRODUCTORY PRAGMATICS  
WORKBOOK FOR 3<sup>rd</sup> LEVEL STUDENTS OF THE ENGLISH DEGREE COURSE,  
UNIVERSITY OF CUENCA

Tesis previa a la obtención  
del Grado de Magister en  
Lengua Inglesa y Lingüística  
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## Resumen

La pragmática es un área de la lingüística que estudia la manera en que la gente usa el lenguaje y la influencia que el mismo tiene sobre las demás personas. Esta área del aprendizaje de idiomas está recién comenzando a ser investigada en Ecuador, especialmente en lo que se refiere a la enseñanza/aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera.

Este estudio investigativo examinó hasta qué punto el uso de un mini libro de trabajo sobre pragmática, basado en inglés estadounidense, mejoró la producción y comprensión apropiados del inglés, desde el punto de vista pragmático.

Este libro de trabajo fue aplicado durante 36 sesiones, cada una de ellas con una hora de duración. Los principales participantes de este proyecto fueron 31 estudiantes del tercer nivel de inglés de la materia “Conversation”, que pertenecen a la Carrera de Lengua Inglesa de la Universidad de Cuenca, Ecuador.

Las áreas de la pragmática en las cuales este proyecto se enfocó fueron la pragmática en la comunicación transcultural, comunicación no verbal y ciertas expresiones usadas en el inglés de Estados Unidos. Los instrumentos usados para la recopilación de datos comenzaron con una sesión, que incluía a un nativo hablante de inglés y los estudiantes que fueron objeto de estudio de este trabajo. A continuación se obtuvo información de los estudiantes por medio de una encuesta demográfica, pruebas escritas, dramatizaciones y una conversación de tema libre en grupos.

Los resultados de este estudio sugieren que, en general, la habilidad pragmática de los estudiantes, en cuanto a al idioma inglés, debe mejorar, especialmente en lo que se refiere a pedir y ofrecer aclaraciones. Otro hallazgo importante fue el hecho de que los estudiantes fueron capaces de usar las expresiones, aprendidas en este proyecto, de una manera efectiva cuando se les pidió que utilizaran las mismas en dramatizaciones y diálogos cortos. Sin embargo, cuando los estudiantes hicieron la dramatización final, cuyo tema era libre, sólo dos expresiones de las 40 aprendidas fueron usadas. El uso de expresiones por parte de los estudiantes cuando usan el idioma inglés de una manera libre debería ser investigado a futuro.

**Palabras clave:** pragmática, comunicación transcultural, inglés como lengua extranjera



## Abstract

Pragmatics is an area of linguistics which, according to authors mentioned later on in this study, concerns the manner people use language and the influence that word choice has on other people. Much research has been done regarding the development of pragmatic skills and its influence on achieving communicative competence. However, this area of language learning is only starting to being researched in Ecuador, especially in the area of EFL teaching and learning.

This research paper examines the extent to which a mini-pragmatics workbook based on American English, improved students' pragmatically appropriate language comprehension and production. The element of pragmatics which stood out, and was therefore analyzed, was the speech act of clarification.

The workbook was applied over 36 sessions each lasting one hour. The main participants in this project were thirty-one students in the 3<sup>rd</sup> level of English "Conversation" classes in the English and Literature Degree Course, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Cuenca, Ecuador.

The areas of pragmatics this project focused on were pragmatics in cross-cultural communication, non-verbal communication, and culturally bound expressions in American English. The instruments used for the data collection started with a discussion session involving a native speaker and the participants. This was followed by a demographic questionnaire, tests, role plays and a free discussion session amongst the students in groups. The latter activity was used to test the students' production after the application of the workbook.

The results of the study suggest that, in general, the students' pragmatic skills need to be improved, especially with regard to asking for and offering clarification. Another important finding was the fact that the students were able to use the target expressions in an accurate manner when the teacher elicited these expressions; in other words, when they were asked to use them. However, when they participated in free discussions, only 2 expressions of the 40 introduced during the application of the workbook were used; this occurred on two occasions in two different groups. Future research regarding the use of expressions in EFL students' natural conversations might be needed.

**Keywords:** pragmatics, cross-cultural communication, English language ext



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## Background and Justification

It is common knowledge that English is a global language; moreover, it is the official language of many specialized areas, such as, aviation, technology, medicine, and business. In almost every profession, there is a need to know at least the basics of this language.

As will be explained later on in this study, knowing the grammar and pronunciation of a foreign language is not enough. If a learner wants to be competent in any language, he or she has to learn the pragmatics of that language as well. If a person does not learn this, they might seem rude or they might even get in trouble for not being aware of the effect their language has on the other person.

The students in the English Degree Course of the University of Cuenca do have to take a course called basic pragmatics before majoring. However, since this is a relatively new subject in the curriculum of Cuenca State University, as well as its importance has been demonstrated by experts, the researcher felt more investigation was needed.

It is a well-known fact that most EFL students in Ecuador are not able to engage in a well-formed conversation with native speakers of English. According to research carried out by the government of Ecuador, most high school students of English have a mean score of 13/20 in language proficiency, which puts Ecuador in the 37<sup>th</sup> place out of 42 countries (ecuadorinmediato).

University students are also characterized by poor language skills. Even the best students are unable to hold a simple conversation in English with native English speakers. This is without doubt due to a number of factors, one of them probably being the students' lack of pragmatic skills in English.

Another important reason for doing research on pragmatics is that, according to the literature reviewed in this study, even though there have been numerous pieces of research on pragmatics, the information found in the studies has not been used adequately to benefit L2 learners (Ishihara and Cohen ix). In other words, according to several authors, the findings in pragmatic competence research should be used to train L2 teachers so that they can then help their students develop their pragmatic ability.

Moreover, as stated by the authors mentioned above, this information should be included as pragmatic exercises in textbooks. One of the reasons why course book authors and teacher trainers, who are usually aware of the necessity to teach



pragmatics, have not included this area of linguistics in their training programs or textbooks might be that pragmatics is unwieldy and its rules are not always clear cut. However, as Kasper stresses “pragmatic competence is not extra or ornamental...it is not subordinated to knowledge of grammar and text organization but coordinated to formal linguistic and textual knowledge and interacts with organizational competence in complex ways”. This means that pragmatic competence might develop alongside grammar or vocabulary, but the extent of this development might be different for each learner.

As has been noted above, Ecuadorian EFL students need to improve their English and this applies to the main participants of the present study, too. Research has demonstrated that by improving their pragmatic skills, students can enhance their overall communication skills as well.



## Introduction

In recent years, researchers around the world have become increasingly interested in the field of pragmatics. According to some authors, such as Paltridge (53), and Yule (2-3), when learning English - or any other language - learners have to take into account a number of elements, namely, social status, setting, social distance, etc. because if they do not do that, they might seem rude, uneducated, impolite, or too demanding. As explained later on in this study, learning vocabulary and grammar rules are not enough in order for a foreign language learner to achieve communicative competence. This is where pragmatics comes into play.

Before analyzing the meaning and importance of pragmatics in linguistics, let us examine a couple of definitions of “pragmatic” found in two dictionaries of the English language. The first one is the online *Oxford Dictionaries* which defines pragmatic as: “adjective” -- dealing with things sensibly and realistically in a way that is based on practical rather than theoretical considerations: “*a pragmatic approach to politics.*”

The American Heritage Dictionary definition of *pragmatic* is “concerned with facts or actual events; practical [< Gk. *Pragma*, deed.] (660).” As can be seen, the dictionary definition of “pragmatic” is basically to be practical. In some cases pragmatics in linguistics might mean using the language in a practical manner; however, as will be explained later, in linguistics pragmatics has a much deeper and more complex meaning.

Before providing a general definition of pragmatics in linguistics, it might be important to quote some experienced researchers in this area. Andrew Moore quotes Jean Aitchison in the introduction to his explanation of why pragmatics is important in human communication:

We human beings are odd compared with our nearest animal relatives. Unlike them, we can say what we want, when we want. All normal humans can produce and understand any number of new words and sentences. Humans use the multiple options of language often without thinking. But blindly, they sometimes fall into its traps. They are like spiders who exploit their webs, but themselves get caught in the sticky strands. (qtd. in Moore 1)

The same author cites an expert on pragmatics, David Crystal to give a general introduction to the meaning of this area of linguistics: “Pragmatics studies the factors that govern our choice of language in social interaction and the effects of our choice on others” (qtd. in Moore 1).

In sum, pragmatics concerns how humans use language and how this usage affects all the other people who are part of a given conversation.

Melinda Edwards and Kata Csiszér carried out a study in Hungary and found that students can benefit from explicit teaching of pragmatics. The students they worked with did improve their pragmatic skills. However this view is challenged by research performed by Kubota and House, who found restrictions in teaching some aspects of L2 pragmatics.

The present, mainly exploratory, research paper is concerned with the extent to which the application of an interactive, skills-development workbook might improve students’ pragmatically appropriate language comprehension and production. The participants involved in this project were a group of 14 students who belonged to the 8<sup>th</sup> term of the English Degree Course at the University of Cuenca, and 31 students of the 4<sup>th</sup> term (third level) who belonged to the same Degree Course. It is important to mention that the latter group was the main focus of the study. The 8<sup>th</sup> term group was asked to take a test on pragmatics, and since they had already taken a course on pragmatics (in the 6<sup>th</sup> term), the researcher merely wanted to find out about their retention of this area of linguistics.

The aspects of pragmatics this research study will be looking at are pragmatics in cross-cultural communication, non-verbal communication, and culturally bound expressions in American English. The pragmatic element which became prominent before and after the application of the workbook, and therefore was analyzed, was the speech act of clarification. There has been a considerable amount of research on speech acts ever since Austin and Searle introduced the term and provided a classification system of the main speech acts. A relatively lesser researched speech act is that of clarification. Since asking for and offering clarification may have a special role in encounters between native and nonnative (as well as between two [or more] nonnative) speakers, the data analysis of the present research study involves looking at this type of speech act and how it helps or hinders communication.



The instruments used for the collection of data were a test which was given to the 8<sup>th</sup> term group, who had already taken a course on pragmatics. The rest of the research instruments were administered to the main group, namely, the “Conversation” group; these students had never taken a course in pragmatics before this study. The instruments administered to them were a session with a native speaker before the application of the treatment, a demographic questionnaire, and a test before the application of the treatment to evaluate their comprehension. During the application of the workbook, the students took two more comprehension tests. In addition, three role plays performed by the students were used to analyze their production during the application of the workbook. Finally, the students engaged in a free discussion session with their partners. This discussion was used to test their production after the application of the workbook.



### Problem Statement

As mentioned above, in the English Degree Course at the University of Cuenca students do have a subject called “Basic Pragmatics” which is taught in the 6<sup>th</sup> term. However, this may be a late stage and students might need explicit pragmatics instruction earlier in their studies. They encounter many situations in which better pragmatic skills would help them communicate more successfully. Furthermore, the instruction provided in the 6<sup>th</sup> term is far too theoretical rather than looking at the practical aspects of pragmatics. Students need to be aware of the necessity to develop these skills and, obviously, they need to develop the skill themselves. Therefore, the intended research aimed at finding answers to the following questions:

1. To what degree does the application of an interactive, skills-development workbook improve students’ pragmatically appropriate language comprehension?
2. To what degree does the application of an interactive, skills-development workbook improve students’ pragmatically appropriate language production?

### Aims and Objectives

#### a. General Objective

To design and pilot part of a pragmatics workbook for “Conversation” students at the University of Cuenca.

#### b. Specific Objectives

- To determine the level of pragmatic skills that the above students may have by means of oral and written tests
- To provide students with a tool for the development of some of their pragmatic skills
- To determine the effectiveness of the materials and methods used





The present research project involved both quantitative and qualitative elements since according to the literature this approach is the one that has been used in this type of studies.

### Delimitation

It is important to underline that this research project was intended to provide practical help for 4<sup>th</sup> term students of “Conversation” in the English and Literature Degree Course, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Cuenca, Ecuador. This Degree Course contains a subject entitled Pragmatics in the 6<sup>th</sup> term. Since pragmatics is mainly concerned with sociolinguistically appropriate oral communication, it seemed justified to carry out the present research and the accompanying application in a Conversation class. Another significant aspect is that even though the research study focused on the *theory* of pragmatics so that a thoughtful analysis could be carried out, the final product, a mini-workbook, was designed to be as *practical* as possible. The aim was, first and foremost, to create an activity book for learners in an EFL setting taking into account the special difficulties that our students, who have no contact with the language outside the classroom, may encounter.

The areas of pragmatics this project focused on are as follows: pragmatics in cross-cultural communication, non-verbal communication, and culturally bound, idiomatic expressions in American English. The workbook itself should be treated only as introductory material for the purposes of a pilot study, since the time frame did not allow the designing of course materials that could be used systematically over a whole school year.

Thirty-one students of a Conversation class majoring in English Language and Literature were taught using the pilot material. These students typically belong to the middle socio-economic class. The students were between 19 and 36 years old, however most of them were within the age range of 19 to 28. Two students can be perceived as “outliers,” since they are both quite a bit older than the main cluster of students.

The pragmatics workbook was applied over 36 sessions of 60 minutes each. The application took place between March and June, 2013, at the University of Cuenca.



The main chapters of the research paper are as follows: Chapter One is the literature review, where the main concepts regarding pragmatics as well as a number of studies on this topic are discussed. Chapter Two describes the methodology used for the collection of the data as well as for the application of the workbook. In Chapter Three, the results of the study are presented, analyzed, and interpreted. Chapter Four contains the conclusions arrived at by the researcher as well as the recommendations for classroom practice and future research on pragmatics in the Ecuadorian context.



## **Chapter I**

### **1. Literature Review**

This chapter is divided into four main sections. The first one reviews the most fitting definitions of pragmatics for the purposes of this study. These definitions are analyzed and compared in order to gain a better understanding of this area of linguistics. The second section concerns the most important elements of pragmatics. Again, these components are important for the objectives of this research paper. Section three discusses the teaching and learning of L2 pragmatics. L2 refers to both second and foreign language acquisition. However, for the purposes of the present research project, L2 implies the situation where English is not supported outside the classroom and, therefore, it is treated as a *foreign* language, as is the case in the Ecuadorian context.

There are various topics that are of interest from the point of view of the research undertaken. For example, the issue of whether pragmatic ability needs to be taught, and how it should be taught is discussed, as well as the teacher's preparation to teach pragmatics, including the view that the teacher is the key element in setting up opportunities for students to learn pragmatics (Ishihara). Another relevant issue of this section is that despite the various studies that have been carried out on pragmatics, there appears to be no sufficient amount of materials and sources on the market for teachers and students for the actual teaching/learning of L2 pragmatics. The fourth section presents a summary of the most significant studies on pragmatics carried out recently. The great majority of the research presented here was designed in order to develop and analyze the pragmatic competence of L2 students, hence its importance for this project.

It might be considered useful to start this review of the literature with a short history of pragmatics, its development, and the main authors that have contributed to its growth as an academic field of study.

In his article entitled *Pragmatics*, Shaozhong Liu mentions that even though this area of linguistics is relatively new, its origins are rooted in ancient Greece and Rome. Liu refers to the original meaning of pragmatics which is "being practical". In addition, Liu claims that the origins of pragmatics in linguistics can be traced back to the American philosophical doctrine of pragmatism and the Theory of Signs by



Charles Morris. “For Morris, pragmatics studies the relations of signs to interpreters” (qtd. in Liu). Ever since the appearance of this manner of understanding pragmatics in linguistics, many authors, such as Grice, Levinson, Leech, and Green, have contributed to its development (Liu).

In order to have a better understanding of what this area of linguistics is concerned with and why it is important in language teaching and learning in general, let us review some of the definitions involved. Although there are a number of definitions regarding pragmatics, the ones below were chosen due to the fact that they are more closely related to the focus of the present study than others.

George Yule in his book *Pragmatics* provides the following definition:

Pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener (or reader). It has consequently more to do with the analysis of what people mean by their utterances than what the words or phrases in those utterances might mean by themselves. Pragmatics is the study of speaker meaning. Pragmatics is the study of contextual meaning. Pragmatics is the study of how more gets communicated than is said. (3)

Another notable explanation of this area of academic study is given by Brian Paltridge in his book *Discourse Analysis*:

Pragmatics is the study of meaning in relation to the context in which a person is speaking or writing. This includes social, situational and textual context. It also includes background knowledge context; that is, what people know about each other and about the world. Pragmatics assumes that when people communicate with each other, they normally follow some kind of co-operative principle; that is, they have a shared understanding of how they should co-operate in their communications. (53)

Both of these definitions explain that basically this area of linguistics focuses on how people use language; the message they want to convey by using certain utterances or pieces of writing. It goes far beyond the study of the dictionary or book definition of words and phrases; therefore, it refers to how the same word or phrase can have many different meanings and intentions according to who uses them as well as how, when, where, or why they are being used. In addition, Yule’s definition of pragmatics includes not only how the speaker or writer communicates something



but also how the listener or reader interprets what is being “communicated” (3). Paltridge mentions that, unconsciously or not, people use collaboration when communicating with each other. Basically, they have to work together in order to achieve effective communication.

In their book called, *Pragmatic Development in a Second Language*, Gabriele Kasper and Kenneth R. Rose offer another noteworthy definition of this field quoting Crystal, who sees pragmatics as “the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication” (qtd. in Kasper and Rose 2). This definition of pragmatics highlights the “constraints” (Crystal’s terminology) users of a language might have. This refers to the social rules that are present in every society; these can be different or may vary from one culture to another. When people decide what type of language they should use or how they should behave, they need to take into consideration the culture their interlocutors belong to. According to Kasper and Rose, “These constraints have to be worked out by language learners’ choices” (3).

Kasper points out that Leech and Thomas offer a subdivision of pragmatics: *Pragmalinguistics and Sociopragmatics*.

Pragmalinguistics discusses “the resources for conveying communicative acts and relational or interpersonal meanings” (Kasper). She adds that these resources might include tactics and language choices people use to get their message communicated.

Sociopragmatics is concerned with “the sociological interface of pragmatics, referring to the social perceptions underlying participants’ interpretation and performance of communicative action” (Kasper). She draws attention to the fact that what might be culturally acceptable in one community could be offensive in another. The relationships among members of a speech community are not necessarily the same in every society. Pragmatics is culturally relative.

As can be seen above, Paltridge’s definition of pragmatics includes the mention of a cooperative principle. The idea of how language users cooperate to achieve successful communication was first put forward by Herbert Paul Grice in his seminal Harvard lecture in 1967.



He starts out by saying that “Our talk exchanges do not normally consist of a succession of disconnected remarks, and would not be rational if they did. They are ... cooperative efforts” (45).

The cooperative principle refers to how people use – or should use – language in authentic and effective communication. Let us analyze the following example provided by Grice in which “A” and “B” are talking about “C”:

A: “How is C getting on with his job?”

B: “Oh quite well, I think; he likes his colleagues, and he hasn’t been to prison yet.” (44-45).

The latter part of this example about “C” not being to prison yet may be interpreted in numerous different ways by someone who does not know the background information. Among others, it might imply that he was in prison before but he is now behaving impeccably. Nevertheless, the people involved in the conversation do not need extra information to fully understand this remark (Grice 45).

The cooperative principle involves four “maxims” which are:

Quantity: Do not provide more information than what is needed.

Quality: Use real information; information you know is true; not information you think is real.

Relation: Deliver only important information.

Manner: Express your ideas in a clear and understandable manner (Grice 44-45).

Therefore, according to the principle of cooperation, speakers or writers of a particular language expect “cooperation” (Grice), namely the application of these maxims by their interlocutors in order for successful communication to take place.

Another important element of pragmatics, and thus of oral communication among people, is something that has come to be called speech acts. A speech act is the smallest “unit of communication” (Jaworowska). Yule claims that when people are communicating with one another, they do not just generate statements based on rules and structures; they “perform actions” (Yule) through those statements. This is to say that people want to achieve something via speaking (47).

According to the above description, speech acts are basically everything we utter which, based on Cohen’s identification of speech acts categories, include assertions, suggestions, apologies, promises, decrees, claims, requests, complaints, threats, declarations, reports, commands, thanks, offers, etc. Since speech acts are





part of pragmatics, and, as stated above, pragmatics is concerned with what is being said and what is not being said but communicated, as well as the factors that influence our words, tone, gestures, etc., the realization that a learner of another language should learn how to perform these speech acts becomes relevant (Jaworowska ).

Yule stresses that “the speaker normally expects that his or her communicative intention will be recognized by the hearer” (48). The factors that typically help in this progression are in the context in which the utterance is performed. This context might include the physical surroundings, previous communication, shared knowledge, etc. (48). The author provides the following example:

“On a wintry day” a person is given a cup of tea. After drinking it, this person says,

“This tea is really cold!”

The above sentence is expected to be a complaint.

He goes on to say that if the same situation took place during a “hot summer’s day” and the same utterance was used by the same person, it would be understood as a compliment. This clearly indicates that interpretation often plays a more important role than the actual semantic meaning of a speech act (Yule 48).

Yule also adds that sometimes the action executed when uttering sentences could include three connected acts. These fall into the category of indirect speech acts (48). With such categorization, it is important to analyze what these three speech acts are.

First is the *locutionary act*, which is the elementary creation of linguistic patterns. In other words, it constitutes what is being said, not what is being communicated: the literal meaning of a sentence. For example the statement,

“I’ve just made some coffee” (Yule’s example) is a locutionary act.

Next, there is an *illocutionary act* inside the sentences like the one above. This means there is an intention or function when articulating such announcements, because “mostly we don’t just produce well-formed utterances with no purpose” (Yule). As explained by Yule, the intention of the above sentence could be “an offer” or simply “an explanation”.



The third act is called the *perlocutionary act*. This is the outcome that the previous acts have. The example used here could be an explanation for the delightful aroma or an offer to imbibe coffee.

Let us examine another example provided by Yule:

“I’ll see you later.”

This sentence could be used in many different situations and can have diverse connotations according to the context in which it is used. It could be a “prediction, a promise, or a warning” (48-49).

Douglas Walton is one of the few researchers who have done work on the speech act of clarification in a dialogue model (165). He says that clarification occurs as part of an interchange between two or more people, adding that it is “a special type of systematic goal-directed dialogue in its own right that has its special rules and characteristics” (194).

Walton claims that clarification is triggered when failure in communication between two or more parties occur. He points out that there are four specific circumstances where a clarification dialog might be needed:

One is the kind of situation where an explanation of an anomaly is needed. Another is the kind of situation... where an ambiguity has proved to be an obstacle to communication, and where clarification of terminology would make the ambiguity apparent to the participants in the dialogue, thereby enabling the dialogue to move ahead... A third kind is the kind of situation where an explanation is required. A purpose of offering an explanation is to convey understanding to a questioner who has questioned something that is puzzling... A fourth kind where clarification dialogue is useful is the kind of case where the definition is offered to help a questioner understand the meaning of the term or expression that he or she is not familiar with. (173)

It is important to mention that in order for clarification to take place, there needs to be some kind of misunderstanding and the person who does not understand what has been said to him or her needs to ask for clarification. In other words, if there is no question asked by the listener about something that is not clear in the dialog, but the speaker explains what he thinks might not be clear; it cannot be considered a clarification dialog because the listener did not request clarification. It might be considered explanation, which is slightly different from clarification, even

though in some cases where clarification is needed, an explanation-type response should be provided (as long as the listener requests it) (Walton 169).

Walton also makes a distinction between clarification questions and information-seeking questions. In the former, the listener asks the speaker to explain something that is not clear to the listener. In the latter type of questions, the respondent queries the proponent about more information regarding a specific topic (174).

It might be important to point out that there is some literature (though not abundant) on where clarification dialogs might be needed and how these exchanges could be performed in situations where native speakers of the target language are involved. However, the use of clarification dialogues between native and nonnative speakers and further between nonnative speakers of the target language seems to have been researched to a lesser degree.

As can be seen, pragmatics is a vast area of linguistics and, by extension, of language learning, but, as mentioned above, this research study focuses only on certain parts of it, namely pragmatics in cross-cultural communication (including failure and repair), non-verbal communication (including gestures and silence), and culturally bound expressions in American English as well as conversational constraints.

Regarding cross-cultural pragmatics, Ana Wierzbicka states the fairly obvious fact that “In different societies, and in different communities, people speak differently... (69). Wierzbicka goes on to say that even members of the same speech community use language in different ways, namely, not all members follow the same conversational rules. The author provides an example saying that in the United States speakers of Black American English do not view self-praise as something negative (68).

Sedinha Tessendorf claims that “Co-speech gestures have to be regarded as a fundamental part of human communication and language use.” Spencer D. Kelly et al. argue that in face to face interaction the voice is just another component of a complex system of communication, which includes gestures. These gestures help people convey their ideas in a much clearer way. “These nonverbal behaviors...would be useful to addressees when they interpret pragmatically ambiguous utterances” (578). Concerning the importance of idioms when learning another language, Michael McCarthy and Felicity O’Dell claim that in the



past teachers used to think that it was not worth the time or effort for people learning a second language to focus on idioms, because they might not use them in an appropriate manner. However, idioms are actually very important, because they are used with such frequency that it would be “inappropriate to ignore them” (4).

Furthermore, Jacqueline Ambrose states that “Idioms include all the expressions we use that are unique to English, including clichés and slang” (180). Native speakers expect non-native speakers to understand idioms. If an L2 student learns idioms, he/she will learn more about the target language and its culture, thus facilitating communication. Idioms are used in formal as well as in informal language. “Idioms share cultural and historical information and broaden people’s understanding and manipulation of a language” (Ambrose 180-182).

Sridhar Maisa and T. Karunakaran argue that the ability to use idioms appropriately is a very important tool when learning how to speak a language like native speakers (110). “No translator or language teacher can afford to ignore idioms or idiomaticity if a natural use of the target language is an aim” (qtd. in Maisa and T. Karunakaran 110).

As concerns the importance of idioms in an EFL setting, Huong Quynh Tran says that many EFL high school students in Vietnam, for example, cannot communicate appropriately in English even if they have an excellent command of grammar and vocabulary. The author claims that it may be due to teaching methods, but he goes on to say that the reason might also be that teachers do not include idioms in their lessons either because they think these expressions are difficult for students to learn, or because they do not know the importance of idioms when learning a second language. However, idioms are considered so important that they are included as one of the parameters when testing speaking in IELTS (Quynh Tran 76-77). The author also mentions that there is not one single definition of idioms. Quynh Tran provides his own that appears suitable for the purposes of the present study: “... an idiom is defined as a group of words that co-occur in more or less fixed phrases and whose figurative meaning cannot be predicted by analyzing the meaning of its components” (77). In other words and more briefly put, idioms are a group of words whose meaning is different from the literal meaning of each word in the phrase.

Idioms are related to pragmatics in the sense that the nonnative speaker, when listening to an idiom he/she is not familiar with, makes use of inference, which



is a pragmatic element that Yule defines as “the listener’s use of additional knowledge to make sense of what is not explicit in an utterance” (131) in order to understand the real meaning of the phrase. The hearer of an idiom may even make use of the literal words in the phrase to “derive a number of implications”, That is, the entailment an idiom has (Vega Moreno 404). An entailment in Yule’s words is “something that logically follows from what is asserted” (131). In this case it is the link between the meaning of the words in an idiom and the meaning of the idiom itself.

Many authors, such as Nunan, argue that developing pragmatic skills, together with other areas of language, help the learner obtain communicative competence.

María Dolores Burbano of Cuenca University, Ecuador wrote her MA dissertation on communicative competence and investigated the pragmatic component of communicative skills in EFL (Communicative Competence).

In order to highlight the need for more than just linguistic competence, Burbano quotes Nunan, who stresses the following:

What is it that one needs to know and be able to do in order to speak in another language? Of course, one needs to know how to articulate sounds in a comprehensible manner, one needs an adequate vocabulary, and one needs to have mastery of syntax. These various elements add up to linguistic competence. However, while linguistic competence is necessary, it is not sufficient for someone who wants to communicate competently in another language (qtd. in Burbano 15).

If communicative competence is to be understood in this manner, it is clear that it is important that L2 learners develop their pragmatic ability as well.

Burbano provides a summary of D. Brown’s components of communicative competence:

Grammatical competence: This refers to being knowledgeable about the principles of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics and phonology.

Discourse competence: This competence entails the ability to put sentences together in oral or written language.

Socio-linguistic competence: This competence is concerned with how a person uses the language “according to social contexts” (qtd. in Burbano).

Strategic competence: This relates to the manner a person uses different strategies, such as paraphrasing or nonverbal language, to make up for the lack of some other competence (Burbano 16-17).

### 1.1. Pragmatics in L1

The study of early pragmatic competencies in L1 may be relevant from the point of view of how pragmatic competencies arise in L2. The issue is whether pragmatic skills are learned before, alongside or after language emerges in children.

Ninio and Snow refer to the debate in which Bates et al. argue that even before children begin to speak, they are able to carry out communicative acts; for example, they can ask for things using non-verbal means. In these cases, they are basically performing an illocutionary act, namely, their non-verbal communication has a degree of illocutionary force since they wish to achieve a certain outcome by these communicative acts. The authors claim that children, at a later stage of development, simply start using verbal means that are meant to substitute for non-verbal behavior (qtd. in Ninio and Snow 6).

Dore disagrees and says that illocutionary acts necessarily involve a grammatical element, something that is missing from pre-verbal communication. The existence of communicative skills before the appearance of linguistic skills does not explain the emergence of verbal communication, because: "By themselves, developments in the pragmatic domain cannot provide an explanation for the emergence of speech; substitution of means is not the vehicle of development" (qtd. in Ninio and Snow 7). Dore also holds that communicative and language skills follow "a separate line of development" (7). For our purposes, this means that the acquisition of language and pragmatic skills can be separated in L2 acquisition, too. Therefore, if pragmatics should and can be taught, explicit instruction and the practicing of pragmatic skills may have to be, to some extent, separated from the teaching of pure linguistic skills.

Ninio and Snow's article discusses four main areas in the development of communicative / pragmatic skills that language learners need to acquire. Even though their aim is to describe how the process takes place in L1, the areas mentioned provide a useful checklist for L2 as well. First is the acquisition of communicative intents and that of the corresponding linguistic expressions. Next is





the development of conversational skills and the rules that govern the way people hold conversations (turn-taking, interruptions, etc.). Further on, speakers need to learn the rules of politeness as well as become sensitized to the cultural constraints of language use. At the end of the spectrum is the acquisition of linguistic devices that allow for cohesion during longer units of discourse and according to different genres (7-8).

The fact that developing pragmatic competence in L2 learning is important does not necessarily mean that it should be part of language instruction in the classroom. It may be assumed that pragmatic knowledge is learned automatically as students learn other parts of the language, such as grammar or vocabulary, “without requiring any pedagogic intervention” (Kasper).

Kasper also mentions that adults, for example, are provided with a large amount of pragmatics for free, due to the fact that some features of pragmatics are universal, and the L2 learner can transfer their pragmatic knowledge from their L1.

Some pragmatic knowledge that is considered to be universal includes the rules involved in interactions. According to Kasper, there are a number of studies which demonstrate that L2 learners know that conversations have certain procedures which make communication possible. They know, for example, that they “have to take turns at talk” (Kasper). L1 students are aware that they can understand certain instances of indirect speech with the help of context, previous knowledge, etc. They also know that social distance plays an important role when it comes to choosing the appropriate language for requesting or greeting, for example. The majority of learners can easily notice when something is being told to them in a direct or indirect manner, as in “Feed the cat” or “The cat’s complaining” (Kasper). In sum, learners of L2 already know a great many of the internal principles involved in conversations.

Additionally, Kasper claims that “learners may also get very specific pragmalinguistic knowledge for free if there is a corresponding form-function mapping between L1 and L2, and the forms can be used in corresponding L2 contexts with corresponding effects.” In other words, L2 learners can use their L1 knowledge of pragmatics and transfer it to L2 contexts obtaining similar results. The author provides an example of this transfer: “The English modal past as in the modal verbs *could* or *would* has formal, functional, and distributional equivalents in other Germanic languages such as Danish and German.” Thus, Danish and German



students of English transfer this knowledge when using English and its use is pragmatically appropriate (Kasper).

Having looked at just two possible sources of free pragmatics for L2 learners, one would assume that they would, at least to some extent, use this pragmatic ability when involved in L2 interactions. However, Kasper stresses that “unfortunately, learners do not always make use of their free ride.” According to some studies (Fukushima; Tanaka quoted in Kasper), even though L2 learners are provided with many free pragmatic elements, they do not make use of them all the time. Therefore, the role of the teacher would be to try to create awareness in learners, so that they use what they already know (Kasper).

Based on the above definitions and ideas about pragmatics, it is important to emphasize that some pragmatic ability is already available to L2 learners for free, even if they are unaware of it or do not use it every time they interact in L2. Hence Kasper’s claim that “without some form of instruction, many aspects of pragmatic competence do not develop sufficiently”.

Thus, the necessity for L2 learners to develop their pragmatic ability in the target language seems to be palpable. Let us now turn to how research has dealt with the issue of which parts of pragmatics can be taught in the classroom and which components present added difficulties for L2 learners.

Kasper presents a table which summarizes the classroom-based studies that were carried out on pragmatics between 1981 and 1997 (Appendix 1). More recent studies will be analyzed later on. The chart describes, among other data, the part of pragmatics which was studied in each case, as well as the instrument that was used for its development. In addition, Kasper offers the results of the studies which focused on what elements of pragmatics were teachable and what parts seemed to be resistant to instruction.

Only two out of the ten studies present “little evidence for aspects of L2 pragmatics that resist development through teaching” (Kasper). These two studies examined pragmatic comprehension, whereas the others focused on pragmatic production. The first one is Kubota’s paper about the teaching of implicature carried out in 1995. This was a replication of Bouton’s study performed in 1994. Nevertheless, Bouton’s students had a much more advanced level than Kubota’s students, which might explain why these students were not able to “generalize inferencing strategies to new instances of implicature” (Kasper).



The other study which found restrictions as to the teaching of some aspects of L2 pragmatics is House's (1996) research about improving the pragmatic fluency of advanced German EFL students. These students were not able to provide the appropriate (natural to native speakers' norms) responses in certain dialogues (Kasper).

However, these studies also showed that L2 learners who were taught pragmatics performed better than the control groups who were not, and that the students who received instruction in pragmatics in a direct way (explicitly) did better than those who were only hoped to infer some pragmatic rules (Kasper).

These studies strongly suggest that pragmatics can and needs to be taught in classroom situations. Now the question is *how* to teach pragmatics. Teaching pragmatics can be a real challenge. Kathleen Bardovi-Harlig and Rebecca Maham-Taylor in their article entitled "Teaching Pragmatics" mention that there is not just one best way to teach pragmatics. They also claim that the use of authentic materials in the classroom helps non-native English teachers develop their students' skills in this regard (7).

#### 1.1.1. Teaching and Assessing Pragmatics in L2 learning

In her article entitled "Can Pragmatic Competence Be Taught?" Gabriele Kasper provides a detailed discussion on the issue of whether pragmatics can be taught, if it should be taught, and if so, how it should be taught and what parts of pragmatics are easier to teach than others.

Her own answer to the question above is as follows:

The simple answer to the question as formulated is "no". Competence, whether linguistic or pragmatic, is not teachable. Competence is a type of knowledge that learners possess, develop, acquire, use or lose. The challenge for foreign or second language teaching is whether we can arrange learning opportunities in such a way that they benefit the development of pragmatic competence in L2. (Kasper)

It seems as though the answer to the above question is, therefore, both "yes" and "no." Kasper highlights that pragmatics is not an element separated from grammar; it is not something additional that a second or foreign language learner might want to have. It is something that a learner of another language needs to develop in order to "communicate successfully in a target language."

In addition, Kasper and Rose comment that in classroom settings, students of a second or foreign language can develop the pragmatic ability in the target language either “as a result of planned pedagogical action directed toward the acquisition of pragmatics;” or they can learn it as an implicit element present in the target language. The authors mention that even in L1, pragmatics is taught “by a range of strategies caregivers employ to teach children communicative competence” (237-238). Adult learners do not have many opportunities to obtain feedback outside of the classroom and sometimes “lack relevant input for the learning of pragmatics.” Additionally, the same authors point out that Bardovi-Harlig argues strongly in favor of teaching pragmatics to second language learners (Kasper and Rose 237-238).

In 2010, the authors Noriko Ishihara and Andrew D. Cohen reported that the topic of pragmatics across cultures and “the link between language and culture” had become an important focus of studies in many different countries throughout the world “for the last 30 years at least” (ix).

There are numerous publications on the results of experiments that have been carried out to analyze pragmatic development in second/foreign language (L2) teaching and learning. Even so, after all the studies that have been done and the awareness that has been raised about the necessity of developing the pragmatic ability of L2 learners, there seems to be a “gap between what research in pragmatics has found and how language is generally taught today” (Ishihara and Cohen). Few educational institutions appear to be interested in incorporating the instruction of practical pragmatics in their classrooms. Besides, there are virtually no textbooks which contain instruction on pragmatics based on the findings of previous studies (ix).

In addition, in the chapter she authored Ishihara states that in her judgment it is the teacher who plays the most important role in getting students to develop their pragmatic ability in the classroom. The characteristics of the teacher herself or himself are relevant to the classroom-based instruction. “We know that teachers’ backgrounds, knowledge, experiences, and beliefs have an impact on what and how they teach” (21). Teachers should benefit from the findings in the studies that have been carried out on pragmatics and adapt them to their current situation; however, this is not an easy task for them. Even if the results from the most meaningful research that has been done in this field were available for ordinary teachers, and they understood the theory behind pragmatics, they would still need specific

preparation focused on instructional pragmatics, so they could then adjust whatever materials or information they got to their “own institutional contexts” (Ishihara 22).

Furthermore, Ishihara refers to Vazquez and Sharpless’ comments that after a survey in the United States about the place of pragmatics in teacher training courses, it was found that these programs focused mainly on the theory “rather than on practical applications” (Ishihara 21-22).

The author stresses the need for the continuous professional development requirement in the field of language teaching. Based on works from authors such as Borg, Freeman, Freeman and Johnson, Johnston and Goettsch, and Shulman, she proposes the following components of language teacher knowledge and she makes a comparison on how these elements relate to the teachers of pragmatics (23).

Subject matter knowledge (e.g., how English grammar works);

1. Pedagogical knowledge (e.g., how to teach and assess);
2. Pedagogical-content knowledge (e.g., how to teach writing);
3. Knowledge of learners and their characteristics (e.g., how they tend to respond to group and individual tasks);
4. Knowledge of educational contexts (e.g., whether L2 is a second or foreign language at the elementary, secondary, or post-secondary level); and
5. Knowledge of the curriculum and educational ends (e.g., whether/how the content is integrated into language learning) (Ishihara 23).

Noriko Ishihara carries on to explain how the above classifications of English language teachers’ knowledge can be applied to the teaching of pragmatics.

Selected components of teacher knowledge for teaching L2 in general	Components of teacher knowledge specifically required for teaching of L2 pragmatics
Subjectmatter knowledge	Knowledge of pragmatic variation. Knowledge of a range of pragmatic norms in the target language. Knowledge of meta-pragmatics information (e.g., how to discuss pragmatics).
Pedagogical-content knowledge	Knowledge of how to teach L2

	pragmatics. Knowledge of how to assess L2 pragmatic ability
Knowledge of the learners and local, curricular, and educational contexts	Knowledge of learners' identities, cultures, proficiency, and other characteristics. Knowledge of the pragmatics-focused curriculum. Knowledge of the role of L2 pragmatics in the educational contexts.

"A preliminary attempt adapted from Bardovi-Harlig (1992); Ishihara (2007); Kasper (1997); Meier (2003)" (Ishihara 24).

In sum, an L2 teacher of pragmatics, apart from the expected knowledge he/she is supposed to have, needs to know the theory of pragmatics and the rules of pragmatics in the target language. The teacher also needs to be aware of his/her students' characteristics so that he/she can find the best way to explain pragmatics to them and the necessity to learn it. The teacher should also take into account what is expected of his/her students; the limits of their institutions; and "the time allowed for pragmatics instruction" (Ishihara 24).

## 1.2. Previous Studies on Pragmatics

Even though pragmatics is concerned with all four language skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading and writing, the main focus of this research, as in most studies, is spoken communication. Cohen draws attention to the fact that the vast majority of studies and concerns about pragmatics and language teaching and learning have focused on the "spoken medium," without paying too much attention to the written language (4).

What follows below is a summary of the major findings as well as an analysis of various studies that have been carried out on this field of linguistics. These studies include recent research in an EFL environment, since this is the instructional setting of the target students of this project. Further, an overview of research accomplished





in ESL is provided. These studies can help us understand the efforts that have been made in order to teach pragmatic skills, as well as the methods used in both EFL and ESL settings. The last section analyzes research regarding pragmatics that does not necessarily involve EFL or ESL situations, but other languages and other approaches as well.

These pieces of research can also serve as a baseline for the recognition of pragmatics as a necessity for L2 learners. Every language has its own pragmatics, thus research done in other languages can shed some light on the importance of teaching this linguistic element. Furthermore, in this section we will try to find gaps in research and identify the state of the art regarding the teaching of pragmatics.

#### 1.2.1. Studies carried out in an EFL Environment

The first study to be examined was conducted by Dr. Abdul Majeed Al-Tayib Umar. It involved 46 Sudanese and 14 British participants and analyzed the speech act of complaint by advanced Sudanese learners of English. These students were pursuing a graduate course in English, and they belonged to four different Sudanese universities. First, the Sudanese EFL students were requested to complete a Discourse Completion Test containing three situations in which they had to answer naturally to some prompts regarding complaints. That is to say, they were confronted with situations in which they had to make a complaint (9). The same test was given to native English speakers. The answers of the native English speakers were analyzed to find commonalities which served as the basis for the comparison done later on. After they completed the test, the researcher compared the replies given by the native and Sudanese respondents.

The results of this study show that the Sudanese EFL students did not have much problem doing the tests in terms of linguistic competence. However, they were not able to execute acts of complaint effectively, even though they had been studying English for about 10 years. Their responses were quite different from the ones generated by the native speakers, and therefore would have been inappropriate if used with native speakers of English because, apparently, the Sudanese EFL students gave their responses based on their own cultural background (33).

Another study concerned with teaching pragmatics is entitled “Developing Pragmatic Competence in the EFL Classroom”. In this article, the authors, Melinda Edwards and Kata Csiszér state that based on their experience pragmatic competence can be taught in EFL settings. Their experimental research included an activity booklet for teaching pragmatic skills to high school students; the booklet was created and used in Hungary. It contained 4 activities, and each activity lasted between 35 and 45 minutes, followed by group discussions. There was a treatment group composed of 66 students, and a control group containing 26 students. The material was used over 4 weeks. The program was based on *openings* and *closings*, since previous research had shown that Hungarian high school students were having pragmatic problems when uttering greetings or taking leave in English due to cultural differences between them and their native English speaker interlocutors. The students were given a pre-test and a post-test to measure their performance. These tests required students to perform role plays. These role plays were videotaped and transcribed. The outcome of this mini-project demonstrated that the students belonging to the treatment group improved their pragmatic skills regarding openings and closings. Edwards and Csiszér concluded that “Our results show that after completing the activities described above, students in the treatment group used more elaborate opening and closing elements, which indicates the effectiveness of the program”. The authors suggested that the pragmatics elements in L2 which differ from L1 should be given more emphasis (Edwards and Csiszér).

In another research project executed by Majid Farahian, Mehrdad Rezaee, and Afshin Gholami, the speech act of refusal was examined. It is important to mention that there was explicit instruction of this speech act. The researcher used a pre-test and post-test design, as well as a treatment and a control group. In addition, a Discourse Completion Test and written self-reports were used. Sixty-four students randomly assigned to the experimental and the control group participated in this quasi-experimental project. After the post-test, a delayed post-test was given to the participants who were also asked to write a self-report to triangulate data. This was basically a quantitative study since the results included mainly the mean obtained by students before and after the treatment (814). The mean of the students belonging to the experimental groups was much higher than that of the control group. This suggests that explicit teaching of pragmatic skills (refusals in this case) to EFL



learners may result in raised awareness and improved as well as appropriate performance (Farahian et al. 818).

This study does not provide the length of time of the treatment. In addition, it focuses on quantitative data only. The results, however, provide another example that EFL students can benefit from explicit instruction of L2 pragmatics.

The next investigation was conducted by Kathleen Bardovi-Harlig and Zoltán Dörnyei. This project concerned the fact that in many EFL settings, (a) grammatical competence is considered more important than the development of pragmatic skills, or (b) grammar is developed more than pragmatics skills due to lack of awareness of the latter (Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei 234). The participants were EFL students and their teachers in Hungary and ESL students and their teachers in the U.S. In addition, the researchers used another sample of 112 non-native primary school English teachers in Italy. Regarding this sample they stated that “We were interested in their responses because they represented another EFL environment in Europe, which allowed us to examine country- and language-specific variables against the more general variable of ESL versus EFL environments” (239).

The instruments used were Discourse Completion Tests, which contained different situations to which the respondents had to give their natural reply. Similar situations were presented on videos as well. Both the tests and the videos had pragmatic and grammatical mistakes. “The scenarios were constructed to elicit one of four speech acts: requests, apologies, suggestions, and refusals” (239). The participants had to choose the option they considered more inappropriate. The results of this study show that the EFL students and their teachers including the EFL Italian teachers consider the grammar mistakes more serious than the pragmatics mistakes, whereas the ESL students and their teachers show the opposite pattern.

The above research treatment did not involve any explicit or implicit pragmatics instruction, however, the results of this exploratory type of research show that nonnative speaker students and their native-speaker teachers in an ESL context are more forgiving when it comes to grammar mistakes and tend to focus on pragmatic appropriateness unlike students and teachers performing in an EFL context. The authors also included videos as part of their methods to collect data, which is something new as far as the studies analyzed so far are concerned.

In another paper, the results of the explicit and implicit teaching of pragmatics in an EFL setting through task-based learning are analyzed. These tasks were

interactions via email and on the telephone. This research was conducted by Yoshinori J. Fukuya and Alicia Martínez-Flor in Spain. There were 24 participants in the explicitly taught group and 25 in the implicitly taught group (1). A pre-test and a post-test were used before and after the instruction.

The instruction with the explicit group included awareness raising and production by the students. They were shown videos with different situations in which native speakers had to give suggestions. Then the students were taught directly how to make suggestions in English that are considered appropriate by native speakers. They also had to participate in role plays, using what they had learned.

The implicitly taught group was shown the same videos only this time the target phrases (for making suggestions) were merely shown in bold type in the subtitles, that is, they were not followed up by instruction and practice. The respondents also had to participate in role plays. Both groups had to make suggestions via email and on the telephone in the pre-test and post-test (6). The results show that the group that received explicit instruction performed better than the implicit group regarding the phone task. With regard to the email task, both groups performed better than they did in their pre-test, but there was no significant difference between these groups in the post-test (1). This is another study then where explicit instruction of pragmatics proved to be effective. It can be assumed, therefore, that the implicit teaching of pragmatics has more limitations than teaching it in a direct way.

The next study to be discussed is one that resembles the present study whereby a sitcom was used as a means of authentic-like material for input in the classroom. This research was carried out by Beatriz Martínez Fernández and Almudena Fernández Fontecha in Spain. The objectives of this project were (a) to test the validity of Grice's theory of the Cooperative Principle as a resource for the teaching and awareness-raising of pragmatics of L2 learners and (b) to demonstrate that humor in L2 can be explained and understood using Grice's theory (concretely, conversation implicature). The subjects were 15 second-year university students. Twenty-three fragments of the sitcom *Friends* were shown to the target students during this activity. As the students watched the sitcom, they had to write down the words or phrases they thought were funny. After they watched the fragments, they had to discuss what they wrote down with the others and explain why those



fragments were amusing to them. The teacher helped them during the process by giving feedback and explicitly teaching some pragmatic elements present in those humorous parts and discussing Grice's theory with the group. Once again, the results of this study indicate that explicit teaching of pragmatics helps L2 learners improve their communication skills and be aware of the different ways of using language in complex, pragmatically loaded situations, as is the case with humor (Martínez Fernández and Fernández Fontecha 31-41).

Using sitcoms to teach pragmatics is a very special choice and may be perceived as an unusual method. The authors themselves conclude by saying that "it would be interesting to implement another experiment for the teaching of implicature using a more deductive, teacher directed approach and compare the results obtained" (41).

Reviewing the literature concerning the teaching and learning of idioms in EFL and ESL, it is noticeable that there is no substantial body of research in this field. In Libya, Noura Winis Ibrahim Saleh and Mohammed Hassan Zakaria analyzed the teaching and learning of English idioms by Libyan EFL students.

The participants were 40 Libyan EFL learners. They had to answer a questionnaire which included, among other questions, idioms in context for the students to work out their meaning. The results of this study showed that most students considered idioms difficult to learn; the majority of them answered that idioms are not taught in school, except for rare cases; finally they said they used context as the most important aid to try to guess the meaning of an idiom they did not know (85).

The authors focused on the strategies used by these students in order to understand idioms. They arrived at the conclusion that the level of the knowledge of idioms is a good indicator of the level of proficiency in L2 learners (70).

Now let us examine an investigation about idioms and the use of movies.

Two Iranian university professors, Omid Tabatabaei and Firooz Reisi Gahroei did an experiment to find out whether movie clips help in the teaching and learning of idioms in an EFL classroom. The participants were a group of male high school students. First, they were given a standard test to determine their level. Then they were randomly assigned into a treatment and a control group with an equal number of participants. The experimental group received instruction about idioms through movie clips, while the control group received instruction about the same content



through synonyms and an explanation of the meaning of the idioms. After two and a half months of instruction, they were given a multiple choice questionnaire to test their knowledge of the target idioms (993-994). The results indicate that the treatment group outperformed the control group, which suggests that the teaching of idioms using movie clips might be an excellent choice for EFL teachers (Tabatabaei and Reisi Gahroei).

The final study regarding the teaching of pragmatics in an EFL context is one that has been mentioned already. This particular study is important for the present project because, like the present study, it was done in Cuenca, Ecuador, where research in this area of linguistics is still in its infancy. Even though, the two pieces of research are different regarding the pragmatic elements analyzed, both of them may shed some light on how English pragmatics might be taught to EFL students in the sociocultural context of Ecuador.

As mentioned above, this project was carried out by María Dolores Burbano, an experienced teacher and language department director at the University of Cuenca. Burbano focused on the socio-pragmatic input offered by the English textbook that was being used by most public high schools in 2011, namely *Our World through English*. The parts of pragmatics this author focused on were backchannels and adjacency pairs. The first, as defined by Yule, are “vocal indications of attention, e.g., ‘uh-huh’, ‘hmm’, when someone else is talking” (127); the second, according to the same author are “a sequence of two utterances by different speakers in conversation. The second is a response to the first, e.g., question-answer...” (127). In addition, the author analyzed whether the tests, quizzes, exams, etc. used by the teachers included any assessment of these pragmatic features.

Burbano was also concerned about whether this particular socio-pragmatic input, namely backchannels and adjacency pairs, was the one needed to develop students’ pragmatic competence. The data was collected using a test given to 120 students belonging to four public high schools. In addition, a questionnaire regarding the awareness of backchannels and other conversational patterns was administered to 28 high school teachers. The audio material and activities that enable interaction present in the above-mentioned textbook were also analyzed.

The results showed that the textbook did not contain “as many interactions as could be desired for an extended analysis” (Burbano 91). Moreover, only one



instance of backchannels was found. Regarding the concerns about adjacency pairs present in the textbook, the results indicated that most of these focused on grammar rather than on naturally spoken English. Another relevant finding was that the assessment instruments used by the teachers did not include pragmatic elements.

With regard to the input students were receiving, this research demonstrated that the instruction students were getting did not help them develop their pragmatic awareness and ability. The conclusion of the author also included the fact that teachers are not aware of the necessity to develop pragmatic skills in both teachers and students. "...if teachers do not have instruction and orientation towards pragmatics..., they are not going to approach students in this sense either" (Burbano 93).

#### 1.2.2. Studies carried out in an ESL setting

The first study to be analyzed is one carried out in Australia by Saad Al-Gahtani and Saad A. Alkahtani. It investigated how Saudi L2 learners of English performed the act of requesting in Australian English. The participants included 8 native speakers of Australian English, 8 high-level Saudi students of Australian English, and 8 Saudi low-level students of Australian English. Their level was determined by means of standard tests. All of the Saudi participants were male university students. One important cultural aspect of this investigation was that the researchers only chose males for this project because there were only few females available and also because in Saudi Arabia, in order for a man to interview a woman, he would have to be her husband or close relative (Al-Gahtani and A. Alkahtani 19).

The authors used the native speakers to provide a reference point for requests in Australian English. The instrument for the data collection was role plays. There were three situations in which they had to perform some kind of a request. In the first situation, a person and his roommate were the main characters; in the second situation, a student and his professor were the main characters; the third role play involved a tutor and his student. The main findings of this study showed that there was no significant difference regarding the use of request strategies between the high level and low level L2 learners of Australian English: both groups used direct strategies of requests. However, these two groups performed differently from the native speakers who used indirect requests in all situations.





In the situations mentioned above, two involved social power, namely, “teacher and student” and “tutor and student” scenarios. The results show that the distribution of power influenced the high-level English learners’ requests strategies more than they did those of the low-level English learners’ strategies. The latter group used mainly politeness formulas when making requests, whereas the first group used more elaborate strategies. One explanation for this, according to the authors, could be that the lack of vocabulary might have influenced the low-level group (Al-Gahtani and A. Alkahtani 21-22).

As we can see, the main difference found in this research regarding requests was that nonnative speakers used direct requests whereas native speakers used indirect forms of speech. The interesting fact is that even the advanced Saudi students used direct language when indirect forms of speech would have been expected.

The next study analyzed the act of giving advice via letters as performed by ESL learners and native American English speakers. This research was carried out by Andrea Decapua and Joan Findlay Dunham. There were four groups of subjects. The first one had 35 advanced learners of English enrolled in a university-level writing course, whose L1 included different languages. The second group was comprised of 14 native speakers of American English in their early twenties, who were enrolled in a university-level writing course. The third group consisted of proficient non-native speakers of English (no number mentioned), whose proficiency was based on the jobs they had or their education. Eighteen native speakers of American English with different backgrounds and ages belonged to the fourth group.

The authors said that they used this 4<sup>th</sup> group because most of the studies have been done with particular students who were not representative of the whole society and “the real world” (Decapua and Findlay Dunham 324). The data were collected using a discourse completion test. In this questionnaire, the four groups had to give advice to people who had problems regarding different aspects of their lives, such as marriage, health, money, etc. The situations were based on popular advice columns found in newspapers, magazines, and on line.

The results of the project suggest that the difference between the native speakers enrolled in the writing course and the ones with different characteristics was not noteworthy. The two groups of nonnative speakers showed similarities in the frequent use of *should (not)*, which, according to the authors, may be attributable to



the fact that many EFL and ESL grammar books relate giving advice to the use of *should (not)*. The two groups of native speakers did not use *should (not)* as much as the nonnative groups. The four groups used imperatives when giving advice; however, the native groups softened their imperatives with “downtoners” like *maybe, just, or please*. They also used more introspective questions when giving advice (Decapua and Findlay Dunham 334-335).

Even though the nonnative speakers of this study had different L1s among them, they showed similar patterns like the use of *should (not)* for giving advice, which was not the case with native speakers. This research was exploratory; no treatment was involved and the suggestion made by the authors is that Sociopragmatics should be part of L2 instruction (Decapua and Findlay Dunham 338).

The next study focused on compliments and compliment responses as performed by native speakers of Australian English. It was carried out by Vittoria Grossi. The ESL learners were adults living in Australia, who had different languages as their mother tongue. Their level was intermediate to advanced and they were taking English lessons at an institute.

The reason why the author decided to undertake this particular experiment was that some students felt insecure in the classroom when communicating or receiving a compliment. Moreover, since they had different cultural backgrounds, their teacher noticed that some students warned other students that certain compliments had a different meaning in their original cultures (Grossi 56). The author and two associates collected the data from native speakers in the following manner. For two months, they wrote down compliments and compliment responses right after they heard them in a variety of contexts like the home, workplace, shops, and their children’s sports events. These excerpts of natural speech included idioms as well. In addition, the author used scenes from two movies for the same purpose. Classroom activities using these data were designed in order to raise students’ awareness (Grossi 60). In the conclusions section of her study, the author mentions that the pragmatic awareness of ESL students was raised through group discussion. Grossi also stresses that the main factor that enables a person to understand a language in context is to consider the context first and then the language (60).

Let us now analyze a study executed by Gila A. Schauer from the University of Lancaster, England. This research focused on awareness and production of



pragmatics by ESL students. The participants were 16 German ESL students who formed the treatment group. This group had not been in an English-speaking country prior to participating in this project; they stayed in England for nine months, so during that year, they were ESL learners. There were two control groups, one group of German EFL students and another group of British English native speakers. The instruments used for the awareness part were a video and a questionnaire, and an interview. The video comprised 20 scenarios; eight of them contained pragmatically inappropriate material, the other eight had grammatically inappropriate material; and the remaining four had no mistakes. These situations included suggestions, requests, refusals, and apologies. The students had to answer a questionnaire based on the videos; they had to mark each question or statement as right or wrong. After they finished the questionnaire, they were interviewed on why they chose either “right” or “wrong” as an answer. For the production part, the students were asked to sit in front of a computer where they saw some slides containing situations similar to the ones in the videos to which they had to respond.

The results show that after nine months in an English-speaking environment the ESL students were able to recognize the pragmatic mistakes almost as accurately as the native speakers did. Furthermore, the ESL learners, even after a month of being in England performed better than the EFL learners, which suggest that a continued stay in an ESL context “positively influences the development of learners’ pragmatic awareness” (Schauer 149). The pragmatic competence of the EFL learners also increased, although to a lesser extent.

### 1.2.3. Other studies on pragmatics

The following study was carried out by Iryna Prykarpatska, who works at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow. The research aimed at making a comparison between American English native speakers and Ukrainian native speakers. The instruments used were observation and open-ended questionnaires. Forty-nine Ukrainians and 45 Americans participated in the study. Both groups answered questions in their own native language. The respondents had to react naturally to a given situation: they had to meet a friend at a certain time; their friend showed up 15 minutes late, whereas they got there on time.

The results show that the American sample used less severe strategies than the other group. Hints and indirect speech were used more often by the American group than the Ukrainian. In addition, the Ukrainians used strategies such as jokes and ironies in this particular situation. It also shows that the social distance in the case of American friends is greater than in the case of Ukrainian friends. The complaints made by Ukrainians were more severe and informal than those of their American counterparts. The author concludes by saying that “All this leads us to the main conclusion that the norms of friendship in the two cultures under analysis are different” (Prykarpatska 101).

The main difference regarding the research study above and the others discussed before is that the participants responded using their own native language. They were asked to react (complain) in a natural way. Therefore, the author was able to conclude that the two cultures were different from each other in terms of their idea of friendship. The Ukrainians were more open and direct, while the Americans were not that direct and frontal (Prykarpatska 101).

The next study was conducted by Spencer D. Kelly et al., at the University of Chicago. It focused on the influence of hand gestures on conveying meaning in conversations. Four experiments were used. In the first one, there were 12 similar scenarios: two actors played the roles of two roommates interacting in a natural conversation ending in an indirect request which, according to the authors, could also be understood as a “literal statement” (580). All these requests involved an object present on the set. The actors were not supposed to mention the object. When performing these indirect requests, the actors used only speech in some cases and speech and gestures in other cases. This performance was videotaped. This video was shown to college students.

The researchers told the students to watch the video and report the instances when they felt the message was conveyed in a clear manner. The next two experiments were similar to the first one. The results in the first three experiments showed that students felt that the message was better understood by the listener when the speaker used speech and gestures. The fourth experiment focused on memory as well. An actress was asked to describe everyday situations, 10 in total. She had to use speech and gestures in the first 5 and speech only in the next 5. This was videotaped too. The video was shown to college students, who later took a test on what they saw in the video. The students remembered more the descriptions in



which the actress used gestures (579-586). The authors conclude this research with the following statement "...our experiments demonstrate that certain nonverbal behaviors, such as gestures, can have a powerful impact on how people comprehend and remember pragmatic communication (587).

Now, let us analyze the study carried out by Thorsten Huth and Carmen Taleghani-Nikazm. These authors analyzed the benefits of conversation analysis in the teaching of German pragmatics. At this point, it might be important to analyze this technique -conversation analysis- in some detail since this was one of the methods used in the present study. As we have seen, many of the studies have used discourse completion tasks as the main instrument for collecting data. The authors of this study - on German pragmatics - argue that discourse completion tasks are based on speakers' intuitions which are not necessarily how they would react in certain situations, whereas conversation analysis offers the opportunity of being exposed to authentic language as used by speakers; in other words:

Given native speakers'... natural competence in their own language, it may appear rather surprising that native speaker intuitions about the pragmatic aspects of language use have proven to be potentially inaccurate. Investigating complimenting behaviour of native speakers of German, Golato (2003) convincingly shows how the perceptions of native speakers *about* their own conversational conduct differed from their *actual* conduct. (Huth and Taleghani-Nikazm 62)

The participants of this study were 23 German students at the University of Kansas. The data collection consisted of audiotaping telephone conversations between these learners before giving them explicit instruction on pragmatics and after the instructional sessions. The conversations were transcribed and examined. After five weeks of instruction, the results showed that most of the learners were able to use the pragmatically appropriate language and behavior taught in class (Huth and Taleghani-Nikazm 72).

Using a quasi-experimental study, Félix-Brasdefer and J. César investigated the effects of pedagogical intervention of pragmatics involving learners of Spanish as a foreign language. The pragmatic element being studied was refusals. The research involved a control and a treatment group; the participants were asked to do a pretest, a posttest, and a delayed posttest. Data were collected by means of open-ended role plays. In the role plays performed by the participants different social status was



involved, namely, in one role play they were classmates, whereas in another, they took on the roles of a teacher and a student. The treatment consisted of giving handouts to the students in which two situations involving refusals performed by native speakers of Spanish were included. As in the role plays, in one situation equal social status was presumed while in the other one of the interlocutors had more social power than the other. The students were asked to compare refusals in Spanish and in English. They also had to share their ideas with a partner.

Subsequently, only the experimental group received instruction on pragmatics. The researchers found that after the treatment, the experimental group performed significantly better in the posttest than the control group. The results of the delayed posttest were very similar to the first posttest (Brasdefer and J. César 72-74).

The last study to be analyzed was done by Eva Ogiermann and focused on politeness and indirectness regarding requests as performed in English, German, Polish, and Russian cultures. This cross-cultural research aimed to provide evidence that politeness and indirectness are perceived differently across cultures (189). The instrument used for the collection of data was a written discourse completion test containing situations based on everyday common circumstances intended to elicit apologies, requests, and complaints from the participants. The relationship between the participants in these scenarios was equal; there was no social power involved. The participants were 600 university students. The results of this research showed that imperatives were used in different proportions by the native speakers of these four languages: 4% in English, 5% in German, 20% in Polish, and 35% in Russian. Moreover, requests in the form of questions were used mainly by the English and German respondents, while directness was used mainly by Polish and Russian participants (209-210).

As can be noted, only native speakers of the four languages participated in this investigation. Obviously, L2 learners of any of those languages can benefit from the findings. Teachers can use the data to design materials for their classrooms, for example, taking into account the frequency with which imperatives are used in the target language.

After analyzing these pieces of research, certain trends can be noted. The first one is that most of them, namely, twelve out of seventeen focused on speech



acts. Compliments, openings and closings, refusals, apologies, suggestions, requests, and complaints were the speech acts investigated in this body of research.

Concerning the importance of speech act production, Jaworowska states that “When second language learners engage in conversations with native speakers, difficulties may arise due to their lack of mastery of the conversational norms involved in the production of speech acts.” There were two investigations on idioms, one on gestures, and one on humor. This suggests that carrying out further research in these particular areas may be justified.

The next noteworthy element is that the main instrument for data collection has been discourse completion tests: 6 in total; questionnaires were used very often as well: 4 in total; videos were used in 3 studies; 2 studies used role plays; an activity booklet was used once; and writing letters as well as conversation analysis were used on one occasion each; in one of the studies, a sitcom was used, and in another movie clips were presented.

Another observation to be pointed out is that in the six pieces of research where some kind of treatment was used, an improvement in students’ pragmatic production was evident. This might be encouraging for teachers and scholars interested in the teaching of pragmatics.

After reading and analyzing a substantial part of the research that has been done on pragmatics, there is no doubt about its importance in second language learning. In the present study, 28 pieces of research have been included; ten of them appear in the chart presented by Kasper referred to above and we have examined 18 more.

The need to teach pragmatics in L2 learning has become even clearer. This review of the relevant literature has helped in the understanding of the methods used to teach pragmatics as well the ones used for the collection of data. The pragmatic elements that have been the objects of various studies clearly point to their importance.

This overview of the research accomplished in the area has demonstrated that there is a clear need for carrying out research regarding how pragmatics is taught in Ecuador (if at all) and how an improvement could be achieved by introducing this element of linguistics in the curriculum. It is also evident that teaching pragmatics in an EFL setting has its own challenges for the teachers





themselves and the present literature review has, hopefully, thrown some light on the importance of understanding the linguistic and instructional implications.



## **Chapter II**

### **2. Research Methodology**

The present project employed mixed methods of investigation. Quantitative techniques were used for the data which arose from the graded test results. Qualitative methods of data gathering were also applied and resulted in a wealth of pragmlinguistic information that required a qualitative approach in the course of the data analysis.

The main reasons for using qualitative methods in this study are that, as Mildred L Patten states, these methods allow for the “discussions of trends and/or themes based on words, not statistics” (19). Moreover, she points out that in qualitative methods, the researcher might be open to making changes in the instruments he/she is using. In addition, qualitative researchers know that the data are open to interpretation; therefore, it is more subjective. Owing to the subjective nature of interpreting qualitative data, Patten emphasizes the limitations of the generalizability of the results and the conclusions arrived at (19).

There were two groups of students that were asked to take part in the research study. The first group involved 14 8<sup>th</sup> term students who had already done pragmatics a year before (when they were 6<sup>th</sup> term students). The other group constituted the main focus of the study: 35 students belonging to the “Conversation” (4<sup>th</sup> term, third level of English) class of the English Degree Course at the University of Cuenca, Ecuador. They were the ones who worked on the workbook as well as took part in the guest speaker events and acted out the role plays. The number of participants was not the same throughout the application of the workbook since it varied between 27 and 31.

The research project started with a diagnostic snapshot of the first group looking at how far students who had already done a pragmatics course were able to recall and apply what they had studied. These students were given a test which quizzed them about the following: theory of pragmatics, practical questions about pragmatics, and questions regarding their knowledge of idioms. The idea behind this questionnaire was to find out how familiar they were with this field of linguistics, and to establish whether the course they took had contributed to their knowledge and awareness of the necessity to develop their pragmatic skills (Appendix 2).



Following this questionnaire the experiment involving the main group got under way. The rest of the activities described below were carried out with them. It is important to mention that before starting this project written consent was obtained from the students, who were told about the research project and the possible benefits they might get from participating in it.

The next instrument for data collection was a demographic questionnaire which was filled in anonymously by 31 students during class in about forty minutes (Appendix 3). The purpose of the questionnaire was to get to know the participants better from the point of view of the aims and objectives of the research study. Therefore, the participants were asked to answer questions both as regards their demographic data and their attitude to learning English as well as the problems they felt they faced while learning the language.

The main aspects that the questionnaire was meant to explore included the respondents' age, their education regarding English in Ecuador and/or an English speaking country, the English input they may have received through family, attitudes to learning English (including difficulties), pragmatic competence, and finally, English input through movies, film series, or other audio visual materials outside the classroom. After analyzing their characteristics, especially their age and their high frequency of watching some kind of audio visual material in English, the researcher decided to use videos and an episode of a popular sitcom as the major input during the classroom instruction.

The next step in the project was to give an oral test to the main subjects, namely the 4<sup>th</sup> term students. As we saw in the literature review, many researchers used discourse completion tests for the collection of their data. Other scholars used free, natural conversations as their data gathering method. In this case, the latter technique was used hoping to obtain authentic language which had not been "forced."

Thus, a guest speaker event was arranged. Since the group on occasion contained as many as 31 students, they were put in smaller groups and were instructed to take turns while talking with a native speaker of American English. This event took place on the premises of the university (see DVD attached). The students sat around with the native speaker and talked. The native speaker, who is an experienced teacher and teacher trainer, usually took the initiative to talk. He was the person who came up with the topic for the conversation and in this sense the



students had no freedom of choice regarding the subject matter. Each session lasted around 10 minutes. One of the video sessions was later transcribed and used for pragmatic analysis (Appendix 4).

In view of the fact that the present study focuses on general and cross-cultural pragmatic communication as presented and practiced in the workbook designed for this specific purpose, it was the students' pragmatic and communicative ability that were being tested and examined during this event. For the purposes of pragmalinguistic analysis, it was decided that the speech act of asking for and providing clarification by native and nonnative speakers would be analyzed. Since this was the pragmatic feature that one could observe often enough, the group discussions constituting the production posttest of the research were analyzed by looking at the same speech act. These discussions were transcribed as well (Appendix 5).

The next instrument for data collection was a test given to the students before the application of the workbook (Appendix 6). This test required the students to make conclusions based on pragmatically loaded contexts that were presented to them. In addition, in this test the students were asked to analyze some utterances that are not considered Standard English but are used by some native speakers of English in different situations. The students had to decide whether they were grammatically correct or not. If they thought a sentence was not correct, they had to change it to what they believed was Standard English.

The next step of the research project was the introduction of a pragmatics booklet aimed at providing practice in pragmatic skills (see copy attached). This booklet was applied over 36 sessions of one hour each. It contains exercises that were designed to serve as a means to develop students' awareness about and skills in English pragmatics. It needs to be said that over and above gathering data for the research, another purpose of the study was to pilot the workbook.

Data about the initial understanding and appreciation of pragmatic issues were gathered by requiring students to work with the first activity (later referred to as workbook appraisal) of unit 1 in the workbook.

This activity was carried out using a video called "Pragmatic Failure in Intercultural Communication" (see DVD attached). This video contained some examples of how the learners' own culture got in the way when communicating with native English speakers. The main purpose of this activity was awareness raising.



The students had to discuss what they saw with their partners. After that, they did a listening activity based on the first part of the video. Then they were asked to identify the problems (pragmatic failure) in four of the scenarios presented in the video. Since the video included taboo subjects in English speaking cultures, the participants were given a list of such topics in order to select the ones mentioned in the video. Finally, they were asked to think about taboo subjects in Ecuador. They worked in pairs and wrote down their ideas, and later they had a group discussion. It was noticeable that the students started to recognize different aspects of English speaking cultures in relation to their culture in Ecuador, because they asked questions about whether certain types of behavior were acceptable in English-speaking cultures.

Coming back to the first part of the activity, students were given a multiple choice question for each situation in which cross-cultural miscommunication occurred.

In the first scenario, a nonnative speaker is talking to her teacher:

Nonnative speaker (NNS): "Teacher, I want you to buy my dictionary."

Teacher: (does not say anything)

After this, the same actors presented the situation in a different manner:

NNS: "Teacher, would you please order a dictionary for me?"

Teacher: "Sure, I'll put in an order at the library for you."

In the next case, a native speaker asks a nonnative speaker if the chemist (pharmacy in American English) was open that day. The nonnative speaker answers "Of course" with a special intonation. The participants had to select the answer they considered appropriate regarding how the learner of English made the native speaker feel by the way she said this phrase. In this case, the native speaker felt stupid for not being aware of that piece of information, while the nonnative speaker merely wanted to sound obliging and enthusiastic.

In the next situation, an English learner from an Asian country is talking to a native speaker. The native speaker offers the Asian guy a drink to which he says "no." Then the Asian guy looks at his interlocutor strangely. The problem here is that in the Asian guy's culture, it is customary to refuse the first offer and, therefore, the host is expected to make another or even several offers of a drink. However, in English speaking cultures the first answer is taken as the final one, since the host does not want to impose.



In the next scene, a nonnative speaker of English is talking to a native speaker. After some time, the native speaker says, “Anyway, nice to meet you.” However, the nonnative speaker keeps on talking. The problem here is that by saying “anyway, nice to meet you,” the native speaker was getting ready to say goodbye. The other person did not understand this, which is why she kept on talking.

Another issue discussed in the same video was some of the taboo subjects in English speaking cultures. The students were given a list of subjects from which they had to choose the ones they heard being mentioned in the video. The options given to the participants were the following:

- A. How much you earn
- B. How much you paid for something
- C. Politics
- D. How old you are
- E. Global warming
- F. If you are married
- G. Invasions

Options A, B, D, and F were mentioned in the video. Moreover, the students were asked to do some informal research about taboo subjects in Ecuador, so that they could have a discussion during the following class, which was then duly held.

The next activity of the pragmatics booklet involved another video called “Ten Common Expressions in English” (see DVD attached). The students were given a worksheet containing the idioms that were to appear in the video.

The first activity was to guess the meaning of the expressions and tell the rest of the class if the individual learners knew it. After that, they were shown the video which explained the meaning of the expressions, and how to use them in common everyday conversations.

After the students watched the video three times, they had to write down what the expressions meant using their own words. Then they were asked to prepare a role play in groups using the information in both videos. This was the first role play that was used for the analysis in this research project; the grades given were statistically analyzed. The task was assigned as homework and the students had to choose their own topic. They were later graded on this production type pragmatic activity.



For the next task, another video was used (see DVD attached). This time it was about gestures used in English speaking cultures. Again the participants had to guess the meaning of the gestures before they watched the video. The teacher performed the gestures and the students had to explain what they meant. Then they watched the video which contained the explanation of their meaning and use. The gestures that were shown to the students are commonly used in the United States.

The next assignment for the subjects of this study was to compare these gestures to the gestures used in Ecuador so that they could make a contrastive analysis; for the purposes of this activity they worked in pairs. Later, they had to prepare a role play in groups including the elements learned and discussed in the three videos. This was the second set of role play grades that was included in the statistical analysis of the present study.

Before they did the next activity in the workbook, students were given explicit instruction on some other practical aspects of pragmatics using the whiteboard as well as holding group and class discussions.

The activities included examples like this one:

A: *María, are you doing anything this weekend?*

B: *Yeah! I will be doing homework.*

Yule states that pragmatics “is the study of how more gets communicated than is said” (3). One of the messages of “A”, in the above example, could be that he/she wants to do something with “B;” it could be the first step before an actual invitation. The answer could be a genuine reply, or it could be an indication that “B” understands that “A” wants to invite him/her somewhere, but since “B” is not interested and does not want to hurt “A”’s feelings, “B” uses this polite, indirect way of refusing what might be an invitation. The idea behind this exercise was to raise awareness in students that native speakers often use these kinds of utterances that appear to have a “hidden message” – in this case a refusal of an invitation that has not even been uttered.

This part of the activity included some contextual expressions which might not be that easy to understand for a nonnative speaker. One of the dialogs went like this:

Maria: *Guess what? I’m going to get a divorce.*

Helen: *Get out!*

In this case, the pragmalinguistic message of “Get out” could be that Helen did not quite believe Maria was getting divorced, but also treated the possibility as





welcome news. Finally, the students were asked to work in pairs and write up some dialogs that included examples like the ones discussed.

Another exchange that was presented to the students also contains a fair amount of pragmatic information – as opposed to the literal meaning – since it implies an indirect criticism.

Ben was on vacation in a certain country. Now he's back and talking to his friend, Tom.

Tom: What is that country like? Tell me.

Ben: Well, the weather is nice.

The obvious question here is what did Ben mean by that? We can only guess what the most appropriate interpretation might be in cases like this, or we can check with the interlocutors what message they were trying to get across. More often than not, what Ben says can be understood as a sarcastic way of saying "The only good thing about that wretched country is the weather" and, consequently, the "correct" interpretation here is that Tom did not really like the country.

The next part of the workbook was based on an episode of the popular sitcom "Two and a Half Men." In order to explain some of the pragmatic elements studied, it will be helpful to provide the background of the sitcom. Charlie is a single man, who lives in his own house by the beach; he likes to drink and is a womanizer. His brother, Alan, got divorced and does not have a place to live, so he is now living with Charlie. Alan has a 9-year-old son, Jake, who spends the weekends at his Uncle Charlie's beach house. So the main characters are Charlie, his brother Alan, and his nephew Jake. Charlie does not get along with his mother, Evelyn or his former sister-in-law, Judith, Alan's ex-wife.

The episode presented is called "Go East on Sunset Boulevard until you reach the Gates of Hell." As we saw in the literature review, sitcoms or movie clips contain language that can be considered fairly authentic and they also often represent a specific culture. Fernández and Fontecha are among the authors that stress this point when saying that "Awareness can be achieved by using either authentic texts or specially constructed texts which successfully simulate authentic use" (33).

To help students develop awareness and competence, instruction and explanations were also provided together with the script downloaded from the internet. As we saw above, pragmatics concerns not only text but how people use



language and how context influences the use of language (Yule 3). This particular episode contains idioms and expressions used mainly by American native speakers of English. In addition, there are instances where the listener has to guess the meaning of certain messages, and the intention of the speaker, by looking at the context.

The first activity regarding this episode was done based on the first scene. The students were given a worksheet containing some target words whose meanings had to be discussed in pairs. Next they received the script for this scene with missing words on it. The teacher played the video and the students watched the scene (without subtitles) and filled in the blanks. After that, the students were given a multiple-choice questionnaire about the first scene. It is important to mention that the questions in the test were included in their workbooks and were not graded. Most activities in the workbook were designed to raise the students' awareness, i.e. they were not designed to measure students' comprehension and/or production; for these purposes other instruments were used.

After the students answered the questions, they had a class discussion which ended with all of them getting the right answers. For the next class, they were asked to act out the same scene in order for them to practice the language and get ready for later role playing. After acting out the scene, the students were given feedback by the teacher. Then they had to create their own role play using the language and some pragmatic elements of the first scene. This was the third and final data set of role play grades used for this project.

At the beginning of the pragmatic analysis, the students were asked to guess what Charlie's profession was based on the explanation given by the teacher and students who were familiar with the series and by watching Charlie play the piano.

Among the pragmatic elements examined was the instance when Alan and his wife are arguing; she is demeaning Alan to which he replies, "Can you say that a little louder, Jake might not have heard you..." By relying on their background knowledge and the context, the students were asked to figure out what he meant by this phrase and why he said it. Utterances of this type are especially taxing for students of English, since they imply the exact opposite.

In the next scene, the participants were exposed to the use of the same word which carried a different meaning according to who said it and how they said it. Jake, Charlie's nephew is bringing his pet guinea pig into Charlie's house. Charlie is not



happy about the pet at all, but Jake is delighted and says, “Uncle Charlie, check him out. Isn’t he awesome?” Charlie replies with “Awesome” said in a different manner which implies the exact opposite. After that, the students had to practice acting out this scene using the scripts given to them, and then they were asked to create their own story for a role play using some of the language and pragmatic situations of this scene.

For the next scene, the students started with a listening activity again. In this part, further pragmatic elements as well as idiomatic phrases were analyzed. One more time, participants had to make use of their background knowledge to figure out the following:

When Alan sees an old friend of Charlie’s, he says, “Charlie? That strange lady from down the beach is back.” The question here is why Alan said that about this particular girl. The answer is that this lady had a short romance with Charlie and insists on coming back to his house uninvited. Sometimes she gets into his house at night when everybody is asleep. One of the things she does when in Charlie’s house is lick his silverware. The expressions used by the actors and analyzed in this scene were: “whack-job”, “one night stand”, “come again?”, “and knock yourself out”. Here, again the participants’ background information, namely their age, was taken into account when deciding to include these expressions. The researcher thought the participants were mature enough to learn them. In addition, the phrase “you’re still going out?” uttered by Alan was examined. They students were asked to figure out why Alan, despite being a native speaker of English made an apparent grammar mistake in that sentence by saying “you’re...” instead of “are you...” as it is a question.

The teacher explained that native speakers often use a type of language that would not be considered Standard English by the book and could be deemed as grammar mistakes; these “mistakes” are not taken seriously by the interlocutors since they happen all the time and do not hinder communication in any way. If at all, they facilitate communication by applying the Gricean rule of being economical with the amount of information uttered. Using a statement with an intonation associated with questions is a frequent occurrence in spoken English, and since the pragmatic force is clear, grammar does not play too large a part. Students realized that they themselves make grammar mistakes in Spanish when speaking “because it is easier to communicate this way”, as they put it. Based on the seven situations analyzed in



this scene, the participants were asked to create their own role play and perform it in front of the class.

Next, the students were given a questionnaire containing multiple-choice questions about the vocabulary and situations analyzed during the first two scenes.

For the following activity, the teacher once again asked the students to watch the video and listen out for specific information. This activity was based on the next scene of the same episode of the sitcom. After the listening activity, the students were asked to read the script of the scene. The teacher answered all questions the students asked regarding vocabulary. Then they were asked to watch the scene again and pay attention to the context in which the dialogues were uttered, so that they could answer the following questions:

1. When Charlie says, “**Okay, you’re not listening. Rule number one...**”, it’s because:
  - A. Jake is not paying attention.
  - B. Charlie thinks his mother is a squealing creature.
  - C. Charlie wants to make sure Jake won’t forget rule number one.

In this part, Jake is at Charlie’s house. It is early in the morning. Jake goes to his uncle’s bedroom with his pet guinea pig and pretends it is talking to Charlie; he says, “Good morning, Uncle Charlie! Did you have sweet dreams?” Charlie wakes up a little upset and says, “Rule number one. Uncle Charlie does not like to start his day with a squealing creature in his face” (Charlie is talking about the guinea pig). Jake apologizes and says that his grandma (Charlie’s mother) is in the house and wants to talk to Charlie to what Charlie replies, “Okay, you’re not listening. Rule number one...” (now Charlie is referring to his mother). The idea of examining this part was to show the students how an utterance can be turned around and gain a funny overtone in an authentic situation; this is something which is not often presented in most course books.

2. Evelyn says, “**Mommy busted her hump on this, Alan...**” because:
  - A. She worked hard.
  - B. She got them easily.
  - C. She knows those lawyers.
3. Alan says, “**Thank you?**” as a question because:
  - A. He isn’t sure he’s going to need a lawyer because he doesn’t think he’s getting a divorce.



- B. He doesn't know if he should thank her or the lawyers.
- C. It's a normal question.

In this part (questions 2 and 3), the expression "Busted her hump" means Alan's mother worked really hard to get Alan the best attorneys for his divorce and gives him a list. However, Alan does not think he is going to get divorced, that is why he says "thank you" to his mother as if it was a question.

4. Is it OK to say just "**morning**" instead of "good morning" in informal settings? Would you say "morning" in a formal setting? Can you think of other (2) examples like this one?

This is a typical example of ellipsis in pragmatics where native speakers do not make use of whole sentences but rather provide what is necessary for the listener to understand the message. Another example of this is how Ecuadorian say "buenas" instead of "buenos días", "buenas tardes" or "buenas noches."

5. Evelyn says that she doesn't "**do**" Anaheim. This means:
- A. She doesn't travel long distances.
  - B. She is tired.
  - C. She doesn't like to go there.

Here, the discussion was about the different uses of "do." Apart from it being used as an auxiliary verb or a verb that is similar in some cases to "make," in textbooks and in most classrooms students are generally not instructed on other uses of "do," like in this example in which this word is used to replace the verb "travel."

6. Based on what the context is, "**hit the road**" means:
- A. Come
  - B. Go
  - C. Hurry up

In this situation the students were asked to provide the meaning of this idiom which signifies "go".

(Questions taken from the workbook)

After all the above input as well as the assessment of how far students had become aware of the pragmatic aspects of the material, the next stage involved assessing the pragmatic appropriateness of language production. For this purpose, the students were asked to prepare dialogues with their partners using the vocabulary and performing situations like the ones analyzed in this unit.



This time, they had to create their own dialogues of about 3 minutes and perform it in front of the class. The students worked in pairs; however, there was one group of three students because an odd number of them were present on that day.

The next data set was collected from the participants by means of a test containing 8 questions which included pragmatic situations, the use of some expressions, and taboo subjects already discussed with the students. This test was given to the students in order to measure their comprehension skills of Pragmalinguistics (Appendix 7). The test contained five expressions, two pragmatically loaded situations, and one question about taboo subjects in English-speaking cultures. The participants had to decide if the meaning or the use of the elements provided in the questions was correct; if they thought it was not correct, they had to deliver the accurate answer. They took the test in their classroom and had around 45 minutes to do it.

For the next activity, the students were given a list of target words and phrases. They were asked to talk to their partners about the meaning of these phrases, and then they had to provide examples of where or when the phrases could be used. Feedback was given by the teacher at this stage. Next, they did another listening exercise, similar to the ones they had done before and included in the workbook.

After that, some pragmatic features of the next scene (of the same sitcom episode) were analyzed. One of these pragmatic features was when Alan started crying and Charlie said, "Oh don't cry; we can still be friends." Alan, asked "What?" to what Charlie said, "I'm sorry; that's the only thing I know to say when someone cries around here." Based on their background knowledge of the series, the characters, the context, etc., the students had to figure out why Charlie said that. Moreover, the participants were asked to work out why Charlie said that his mother's address was "The Gates of Hell." By now we know he said it because he does not get along with his mother; Charlie thinks his mother is evil.

In the next awareness-raising activity, the participants were asked to analyze some of the utterances below and look at how they were used in the sitcom; the teacher explained the ones the students were unclear about. They were also asked to change the phrases into Standard or formal English. The phrases were the following:

1. People are gonna do whatever they're gonna do in this world.



2. You get that I'm loaded, right?
3. How'd it go?
4. This isn't our car?
5. Your mother sounds like a real piece of work.
6. My mother took my baby brother and dipped him in sissy sauce...
7. Look who's got beer muscles...
8. You ready?
9. Night. (as a good bye)
10. ...And you completely screwed up our lives.

This was the final activity they did regarding the workbook and the application in general. The above mentioned activities are only a summary of what the participants did during the 36 hours of application of the workbook.

Up to this stage, the data were gathered on the bases of elicited tasks, namely, the students were given cues as to what they had to do. On some occasions, they were asked to mark "right" or "wrong", at other times they had to prepare role plays using the situations and language previously discussed. This method was applied in all of the data-collection techniques, except in one, the guest speaker event, which took place before the application started.

The final data gathering instrument involved making video recordings of the students while they conducted small group discussions (see DVD attached). Based on the evidence provided by the recordings, the researcher wanted to assess any improvement in pragmatically appropriate language production in a situation that required the students to interact without any guidance or cues regarding the content of the discussion. The intention was to find out how the participants behaved when talking spontaneously to their classmates.

First, the participants were divided into groups of three or four people. They were then asked to perform a natural conversation among themselves. Each conversation lasted around 3 minutes. No specific theme was given to them. They had to think of the topic they wanted to talk about. They were not asked to use any particular language, gesture, or pragmatic situation that had been discussed; they were just asked to talk freely. Each of these conversations were videotaped and transcribed for later analysis. They performed these conversations in class without any audience except for the teacher who videotaped them.





Before we move onto the data analysis, let us summarize the main considerations and conclusions regarding the data gathering phase of the present project.

Even though a variety of data-collection techniques have been used in the pragmatic studies described in the Literature Review, the following techniques seemed to be most suitable for the purposes of the present project: authentic discourse, role play, and questionnaires.

Kasper and Rose mention that some researchers use field-note taking to collect authentic discourse data, but there is evidence that videotaping is the best tool for the purpose. They also state that, although the presence of the person who is videotaping might influence the respondents' behavior, this influence fades away once the respondents concentrate on the task. Besides, in an instructional context, the students are used to conducting conversations in front of the teacher, so if it is him or her making the recording, the students may not be affected to a degree that would alter their behavior significantly (81). On occasion, as it happened in the case of the present project, an outsider may be part of the experiment; in this case, it was a university professor who was duly introduced to the students before the event involving him took place.

Kasper and Rose draw attention to the fact that it may take a large amount of time to find the pragmatic elements the researcher is looking for (81). However, the use of authentic discourse - as far as this can be achieved in a classroom setting - has several advantages, such as access to naturally occurring speech, and the natural behavior of participants, etc. This gives researchers, students, and teachers the opportunity to analyze interactions the way they happen in everyday conversations. What is more, the transcript of this type of data can be used for classroom instruction as well. This input is different from the typical course book content because, as Huth and Taleghani-Nikazm point out, "dialogs in textbooks do not follow patterns of naturally occurring talk and are mainly designed to introduce new grammar and /or vocabulary. As a result, they fail to discuss L2 socio-pragmatic norms and cultural differences underlying speakers' verbal behavior" (73).

Kasper and Rose describe another method for the gathering of pragmatic data, namely role plays. They refer to Crookall and Saunders who provide the following definition of role play: "a social or human activity in which participants 'take on' and 'act out' specified 'roles,' often within a predefined social framework or



situational scenario” (qtd. in Kasper and Rose 86). In the present study, two kinds of role plays were used: spontaneous role plays, in which “players retain their own identity” (Kasper and Rose 86) and mimetic-replicating role play in which “they play the role of a visually presented model” (Kasper and Rose 86). The latter type was used for the exploration of the popular sitcom entitled *Two and a Half Men*, when the participants were asked to perform the same scene they had seen using the scripts provided. The great advantage of role plays is that they give learners and their teachers a context to be analyzed as well as “communicative events, power, distance and degree of imposition” (Kasper and Rose 87).

Questionnaires have certain limitations when used for the purposes of gathering pragmatic data. This is due to the fact that many pragmatic features, such as turn taking, intonation and gestures, can only be observed by watching how spoken interaction actually takes place. However, one of the advantages of using questionnaires is that researchers can have relatively quick access to data. For this reason, questionnaires are still fairly frequently used in pragmatic research (Kasper and Rose 89). This fact led the researcher to using questionnaires including multiple-choice questions as a useful tool in the present study, since they appear to be a versatile instrument when eliciting pragmatic information (96).

In Appendix 8 a table containing the chronological sequence of the research as well as the instruments used in the study are presented.

In the above chapter on methodology our aim was to provide an overview of the research methods applied. Research projects in pragmatics have a number of special difficulties that needed to be taken into account when choosing the most appropriate tools and instruments.

An effort was made to identify and employ a mix of research tools that would provide both quantitative and qualitative data. By using surveys, tests, role plays, guest speaker events, and group discussions, it was hoped that the data analysis would bring to the surface meaningful results regarding pragmatic comprehension and production in an EFL context.



### **Chapter III**

#### **3. Data Description, Analysis, and Interpretation**

In the next chapter of the study, a thorough report of the data will be discussed. In addition, an analysis and interpretation of these data will be provided. The research instruments (questionnaires and test papers) have been included in the Appendix. The quantitative and qualitative data will be analyzed separately.

The quantitative data include questionnaires given to both 8<sup>th</sup> term and 4<sup>th</sup> term students. As mentioned above, the first group only participated in this research project indirectly since they were given a questionnaire once, at the beginning of this project. The questionnaires given to the 8<sup>th</sup> term students included pragmatic theory, pragmatic practice, and fixed expressions. The questionnaires the main group received contained pragmatic theory, pragmatic practice, and fixed expressions recognition and repair of nonstandard English sentences. In addition, some questionnaires were about activities during the application of the workbook. These quantitative data also include the grades the participants got for the creation and performance of the role plays related to the activities in the workbook.

The qualitative data of the study include the session with a native English speaker that the students had at the beginning of this project. Furthermore, in this section, the free discussions the participants were asked to perform after the treatment is also analyzed. These discussions were carried out among the students only. That is, they were nonnative-nonnative exchanges. Additionally, the sitcom is also analyzed in a qualitative manner. The pragmatic element analyzed in this section is the speech act of giving and asking for clarification, since this was the part of pragmatics that surfaced most consistently in the students' production stage.

##### **3.1. Quantitative Data**

Let us start with the questionnaire that was given to fourteen 8<sup>th</sup> term students who had already done pragmatics in their 6<sup>th</sup> term. The first question aimed at finding out how far students understood pragmatics as a linguistic concept. The question was, Pragmatics is an area of language learning that deals with:

They were offered the following options to choose from:

- A: Language and numbers
- B: Language and culture
- C: Language and mathematics
- D: Language and grammar

The students' answers are shown in the figure below:

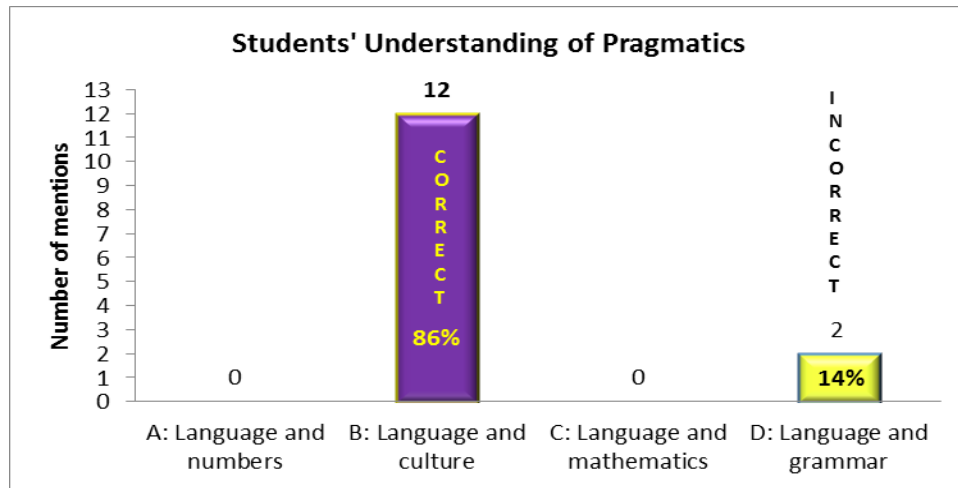


FIG.3. 1: Source: 8<sup>th</sup> term questionnaire

Apparently, most of the students, that is 86%, (12 students) were aware that pragmatics is related to language and culture. Only 14 % of them (2 students) thought that pragmatics concerns language and grammar. None of the students perceived pragmatics as a linguistic study that involves numbers / mathematics.

It seems to be the case that, after the elapse of almost a year, the majority of the 14 students retained a basic understanding of what pragmatics is about. This might be due to the fact that, at the beginning of their course, about two months were spent on explaining and discussing the major theories on pragmatics. This shows that the students had, at least, a general idea of the theoretical aspects of pragmatics.

The questionnaire then asked the students to evaluate pragmatically loaded utterances requiring them to look beyond the literal meaning. The students were given the following context to analyze:

Somebody commenting on a movie: *"Well, the sound effects were awesome."*

The students had to choose the meaning of the latter comment. They were given the following options:

- A. He liked the movie.
- B. He didn't like the movie.
- C. He wants to talk about sound effects.

The results are summarized in the figure below:

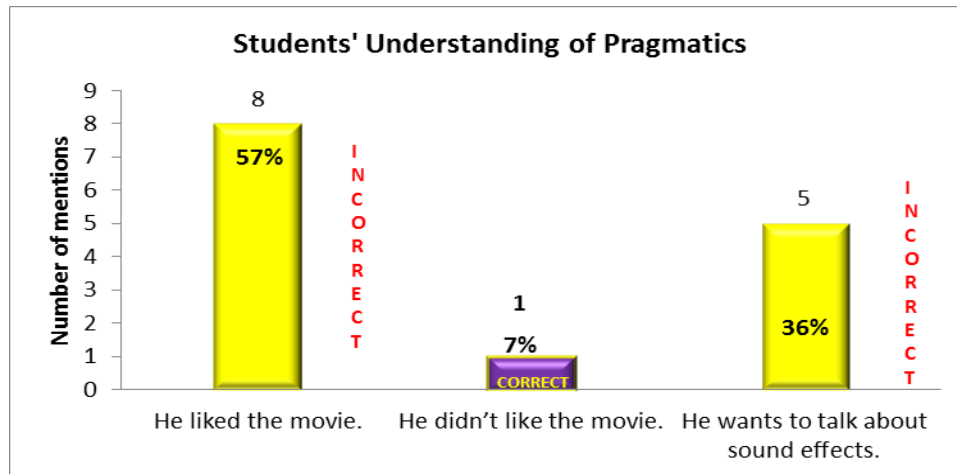


FIG.3. 2: Source: 8<sup>th</sup> term questionnaire

We can see that only 7% of the students, in other words one, were able to figure out the correct answer, namely, understand and interpret the non-literal meaning of the utterance. More than half, that is 57%, chose the literal meaning as the right answer and about a third - 36%- took the comment as genuine enthusiasm regarding one aspect of the film.

It needs to be noted that this group of students was exposed to sentences like the above without explicit instruction.

The results confirm Kasper's observation that in the case of some aspects of pragmatics, exposure alone is not enough and certain utterances like the one above, which represents indirect criticism, are more difficult to teach than others.

### 3.1.1. Test before application

3.1.2. From this point onwards the data refer to the main participants of the research study, namely the 31 students of the Conversation Course mentioned earlier.

The first set of data shows how often the participants tended to watch some kind of audiovisual program (movies, series, etc.) in English. These data helped the researcher decide if it was appropriate to use videos and a popular series as the main part of the input provided to the students during the application of the workbook.

The results are summarized in the chart below.

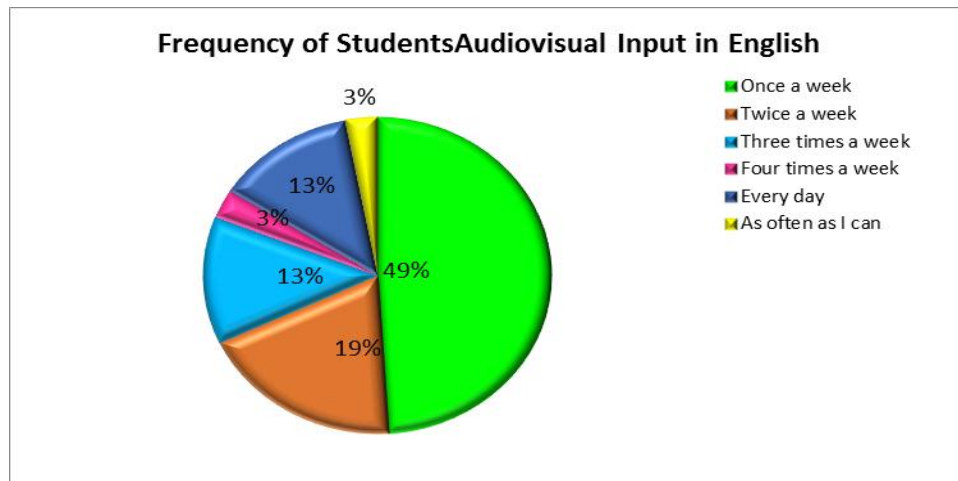


FIG.3. 3: Source: Demographic questionnaire

It is evident that students are avid users of audiovisual sources in English; 49% (15 students) watched such programs once a week. Nineteen percent (6 students) enjoyed audiovisuals 2 times a week; 13% (4 students) declared that they were accustomed to doing this three times a week and another 13% said that they did it every day. Three percent (1) of the students mentioned that they used audiovisual sources in English as often as they could, and another 3% declared that they did it four times a week.

From the point of view of the research study, this high frequency rate implied that the researcher could expect the students to find using a sitcom an engaging activity.

As has been noted in the literature review, Kathleen Bardovi-Harlig and Zoltán Dörnyei carried out a study to examine how seriously EFL students and teachers as well as ESL students and teachers considered grammar mistakes as opposed to pragmatically inappropriate sentences. The results showed that the EFL students and teachers deemed the grammar mistakes more serious than the pragmatic mistakes, while the ESL students and teachers regarded the pragmatic mistakes as being more serious (239). Kasper points out that “This finding strongly suggests that without a pragmatic focus, foreign language teaching raises students’ *metalinguistic*



awareness, but it does not contribute much to develop their *metapragmatic* consciousness in L2.”

Based on this evidence, and the fact that native speakers (of any language) subconsciously make grammar mistakes which are perfectly acceptable in many contexts - as is the case in some instances of the sitcom used - the researcher of the study believes that EFL students could benefit from explicit instruction about these grammar mistakes that do not, in any way, hinder communication between native speakers. For this reason, feedback was given to the students when discussing the repairs they provided.

The next task was to have the students analyze some utterances that are not considered as Standard English but are used by some native speakers of English in different situations. After reading them, the students had to decide whether they were grammatically correct or not and then they had to change them to what they believed was Standard English.

The sentences given as examples could be judged as pragmatically acceptable depending on where they are used and who is using them. For example, these sentences are considered as normal speech elements of Black American English. The intention of this activity was to examine whether the students were able to recognize any mistakes, and if they could repair these pragmatically appropriate sentences which contained the violations of strict grammar rules.

The corrections the students made to these utterances were analyzed in order to find out if there were any patterns. One of the patterns found were “bad” repairs, which were examined in order to try to discover whether the students were using negative transfer from their L1 or simply did not have the required grammar knowledge.

The next chart shows the ratio of successful and unsuccessful repairs of the first nonstandard sentence.

*I ain't seen him for a long time.*

The results are summarized in the next graph:



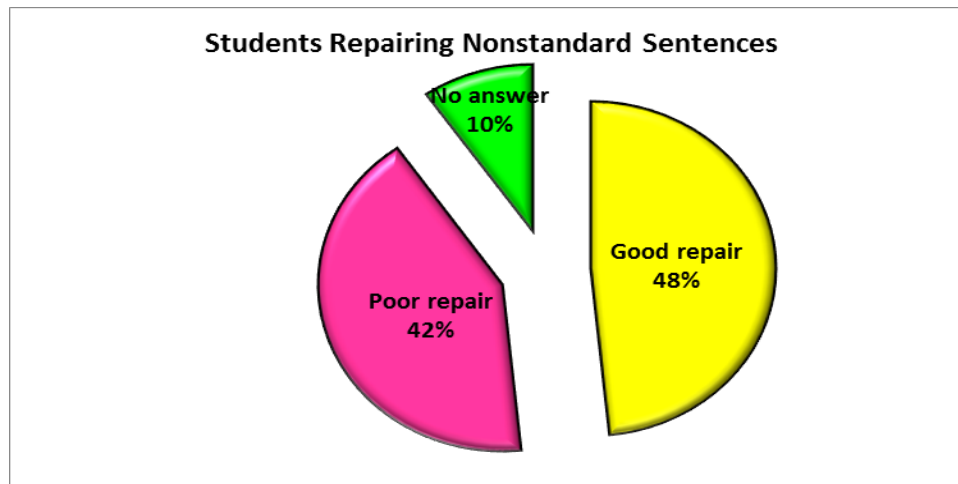


FIG.3. 4: Source: Test before application

As can be seen, 90% of the students attempted to repair the sentence, while 10% did not answer. Out of the 28 students, who thought the sentence was not Standard English, 48% (15 students) provided a grammatically acceptable repair, whereas 42% (13 students) were not able to provide a good repair.

Even though language teaching is grammar-focused in Ecuador, it still seems that students find certain aspects of grammar difficult to acquire (e.g. Present Perfect Tense). For example, several students repaired the sentence by saying “I am not seen him for a long time” or “I didn’t seen him for a long time.”

The next utterance was as follows:

*Want to go see a movie?*

The results for the attempted repairs regarding the second sentence are summarized below:

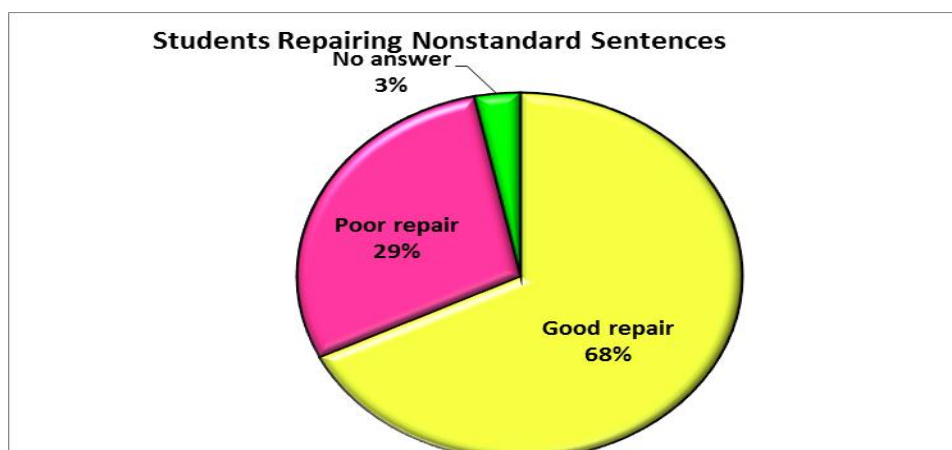


FIG.3. 5: Source: Test before application

As can be seen, 97% (30 students) deemed the sentence as non-standard English. Only one student did not reply.

Roughly two-thirds of the students (68%) provided good repairs suggesting that they were aware of the Standard English grammatical structure involved. It is interesting that the students who provided incorrect repairs were aware that the auxiliary “do” was missing in the sentence and included it in the repair; however, they made minor grammar mistakes in the rest of the sentence.

The next statement was the following:

*Long time no see*

The results for the students’ repairs are shown in the next graph:

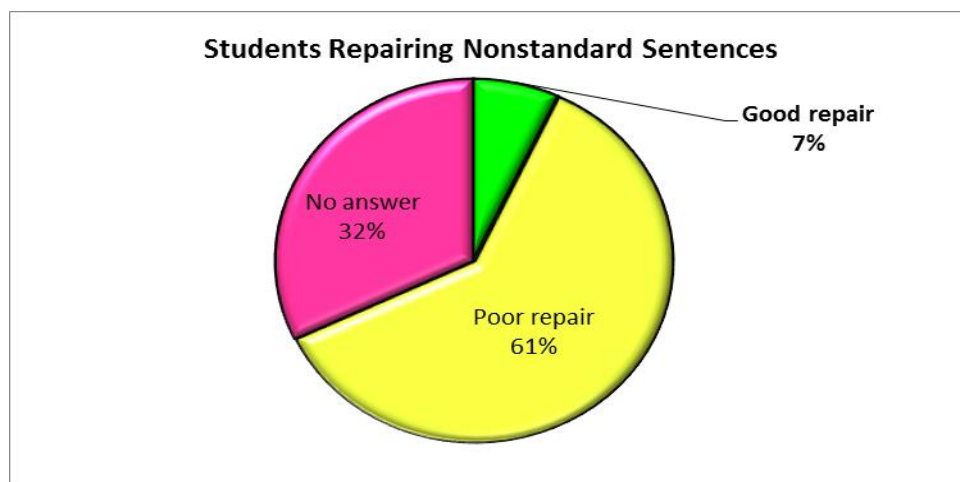


FIG.3. 6: Source: Test before application

As can be seen, 61% (19 students) made an attempt at repairing the sentence, but failed, while 32% (10 students) provided no answer at all. Only 7% (2 students) managed to either provide good repair or acknowledge that the sentence was correct in its original version.

These results are very different from the previous ones which concerned sentences that are not considered Standard English, because the expression “Long time no see” is a set phrase in Standard English.

One reason for such striking results, namely, no answers and bad repairs, may be that expressions like this are probably not taught very often in EFL classrooms in Ecuador. In the case of the previous sentences, it might have been easier for the students to identify the grammar problem and how the utterance needed to be repaired.

With expressions like “Long time no see”, there is no hint as to how it could be repaired and, actually, as we have explained above, it does not even need repair. It

is grammatically correct, idiomatically unique, and pragmatically acceptable. However, the students suggested repairs like “Long time without see you”, “Don’t see for long time” and “How long don’t you see?”

The next sentence was:

*You went to the game by yourself?*

As mentioned above, the students were asked to provide a repair in case they thought the sentence was not Standard English. The results for this sentence are expressed in the next figure:

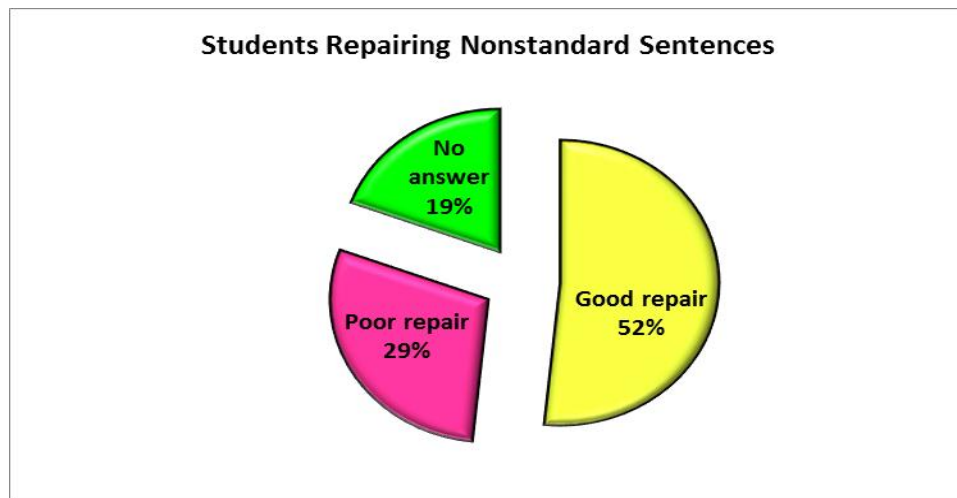


FIG.3. 7: Source: Test before application

As the graph shows, 52% (16 students) provided good repairs, which might be due to the fact that the auxiliary “did” was missing from the sentence and students are generally more familiar with the use of the Simple Past. Twenty-nine percent (9 students) repaired the sentence poorly, while 19% (6 students) did not provide any answer.

The next example included a pragmatic element explained below. The sentence was:

*Got any cash?*

The results of the attempted repairs are summarized in the chart below:

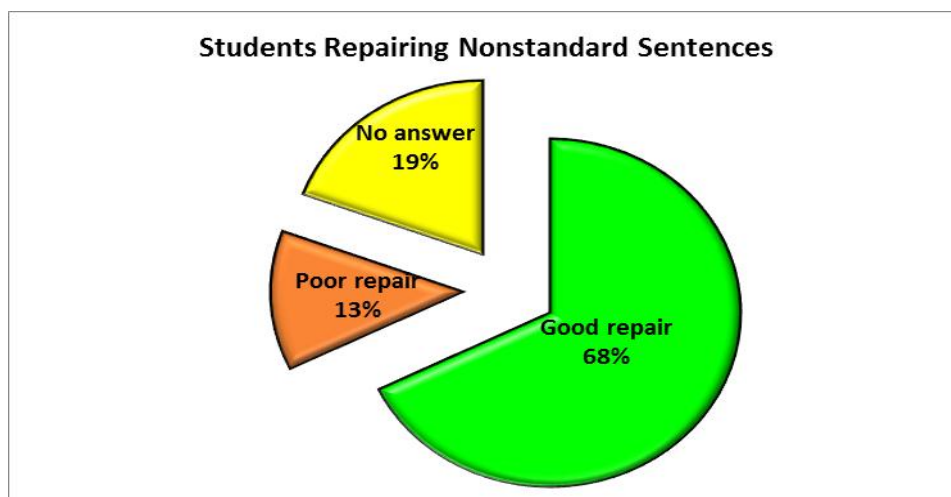


FIG.3. 8: Source: Test before application

Eighty-one percent (25 students) made an attempt at repairing the sentence, and out of this percentage rate, 68% (21 attempts) were deemed acceptable and 13% (4 attempts) as poor.

Since the utterance “Got any cash?” has the pragmatic force of asking if the hearer actually has any money on him or her, the appropriate repair is something like “Have you got any cash?”

Repairs like “Did you get any cash?” are grammatically correct, but do not convey the pragmatic message referred to above and, therefore, may be considered as pragmatically inappropriate.

It could be the case that an EFL student whose overall language skills are advanced, but lacks pragmatic skills, upon being asked the above question, might reply: “Yes, I have”, without acting on the possible, hidden message, which is asking the EFL student to lend some money. The results seem to confirm the fact that explicit pragmatic instruction must be made part of EFL teaching and learning to move away from the grammar focus and avoid pragmatic failures which can lead to misunderstandings in communication.

The next statement included a double negative utterance, which, as many EFL teachers and students know is not considered Standard English (even some computers mark it as wrong), but, as mentioned before, can be pragmatically appropriate depending on the context where it is used or who uses this type of structure. The sentence given to the students was:

*I don't see nobody.*

The results are presented in the chart below:

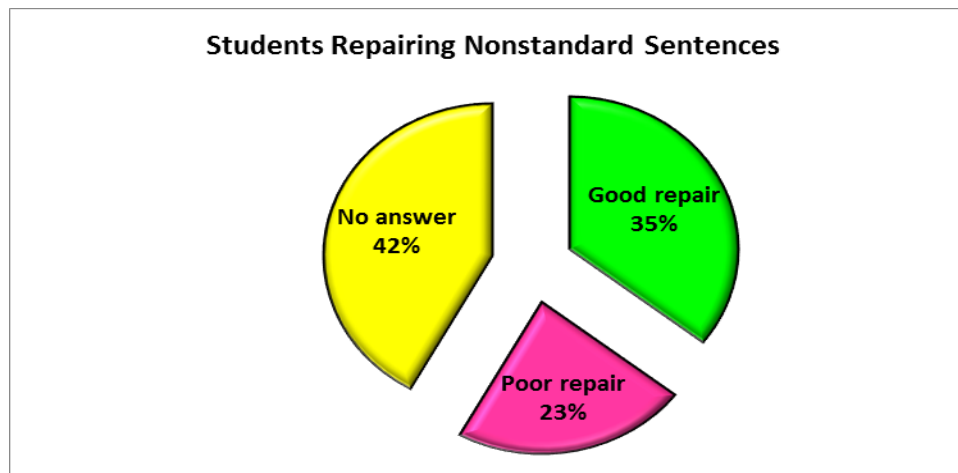


FIG.3. 9: Source: Test before application

As illustrated in the chart, 35% (11 students) provided a good repair of the sentence (or deemed it correct to start with), while 23% (7 students) were unable to repair the sentence in an acceptable manner. Forty-two percent (13 students) did not provide any answer.

The high number of students who could not provide any answer might indicate that they thought the target sentence including a double negative was perhaps correct. Further, there were 5 students out of 7 providing poor repair using some kind of double negative. This seems to suggest that there was a degree of negative transfer from Spanish where the double negative is a standard feature.

The next four sets of data refer to a task that required the students to make conclusions based on the pragmatic content of the utterances that were presented to them. The first utterance was as follows:

*Ana's sister bought three houses.*

The students had to decide which interpretation was correct:

- Ana has one sister.
- Ana has more than one sister.
- Ana and her sister are rich.

The results are summarized below:

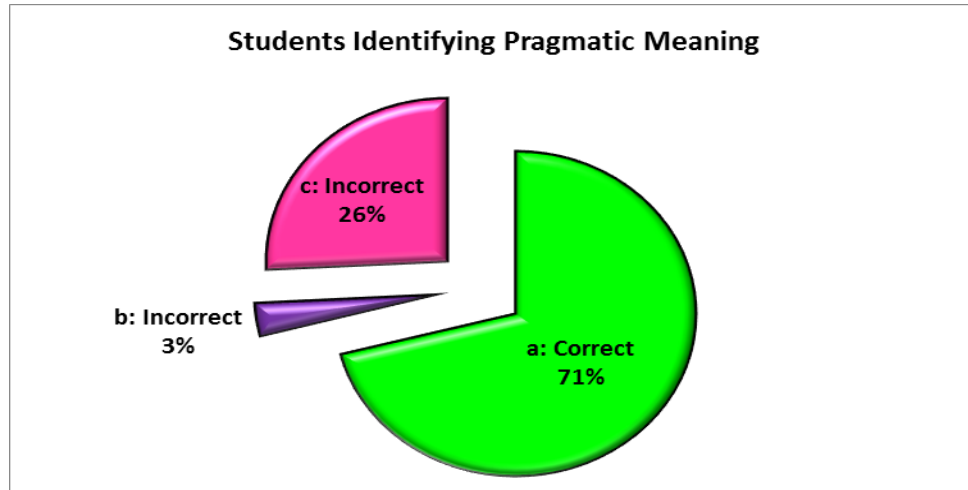


FIG.3. 10: Source: Test before application

It can be seen that 71% (22 students) chose sentence 'a', which was the correct answer. Twenty-six percent (8 students) replied that sentence 'c' was the correct answer because they assumed that the sentence to be decided on implies that Ana and her sister are rich. Three percent (1) of the students chose sentence 'b' as the correct answer, which was not correct.

In this situation, sentence 'a' is the correct answer because the genitive in the target sentence implies that Ana has one sister. If she had more, in English we would say: "One of Ana's sisters bought three houses." As for her and her sister being rich, the information provided in the target sentence is not sufficient to decide either way, and is even less true about Ana herself.

From among the two wrong answers, eight times as many opted for sentence 'c' than 'b'. A possible explanation might be that the students thought that if a person can afford to buy three houses, that person must be rich, and by extension, so is her sister. This is obviously false logic.

In the next instance, the students were asked to analyze the sentence "My father stopped smoking." The options they had for the correct answer were:

- a. My father is sick because of smoking.
- b. My father was smoking a cigarette and then he stopped.
- c. My father used to be a smoker, but he quit.

The results are shown in the chart below:

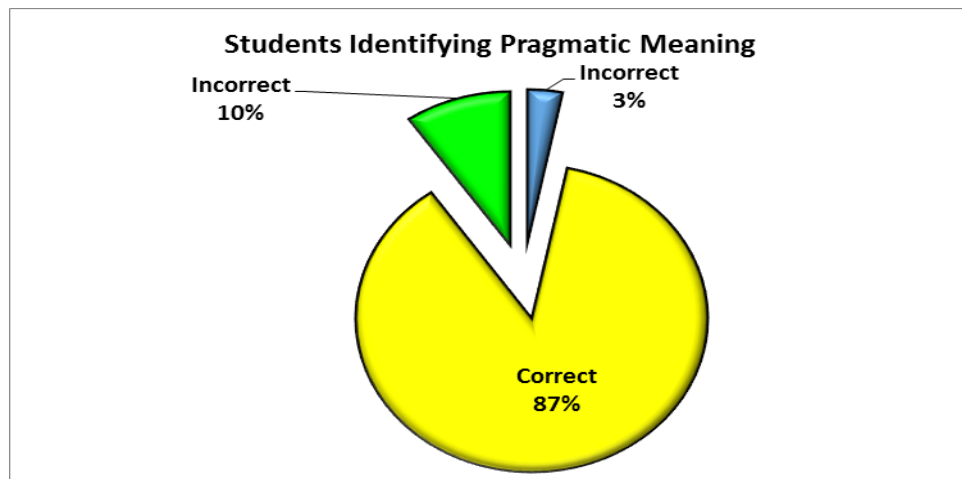


FIG.3. 11: Source: Test before application

The graph shows that 87% (27 students) were right when choosing sentence 'b' as the correct answer. Three students (10%) selected sentence 'c' and 3% (1 student) opted for sentence 'a'.

In this context, sentence 'b' is the correct answer because sentence 'a' would imply that the person was in the process of smoking and moving at the same time when suddenly something made him stop. Therefore "smoking" and "stopped" do not relate to each other. As for sentence 'c', the target sentence does not necessarily mean that the person is sick from smoking.

Even though this sentence was part of a test before the application of the workbook, the great majority of the students chose the correct answer. This might be because *stop* is, in some cases, a synonym of *quit*. Those who did not choose the correct answer might have come to a logical conclusion since smoking and ill health have been proven to be related, but in actual fact, the information provided does not substantiate this assumption.

In the next instance, the students were presented with the following exchange:

X: Why did she go back to the house?

Y: She went to look for a gun or something.

The students had to select the most appropriate assumption.

- a. She has a gun.
- b. She may have a gun.
- c. She likes guns.



The results are exposed in the chart below:

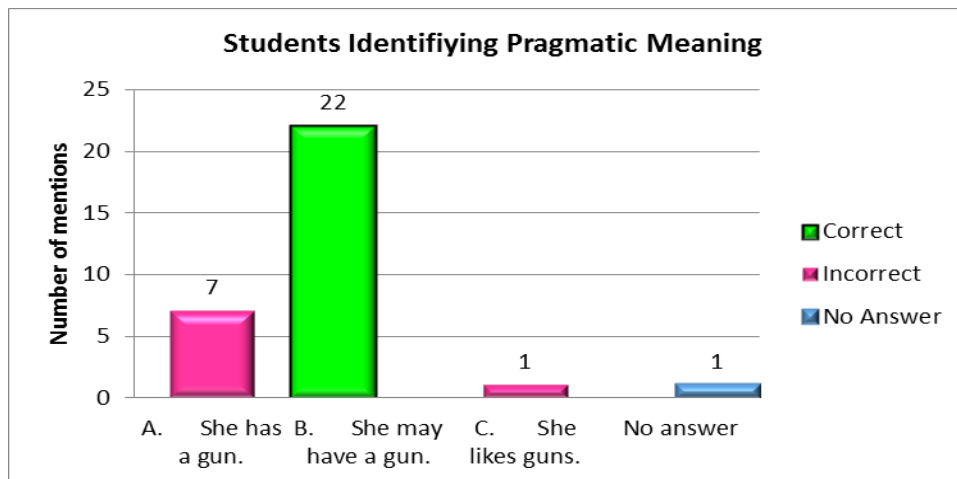


FIG.3. 12: Source: Test before application

It can be seen that 71 % (22 students) chose the correct answer which was 'b'. Twenty-three percent (7 students) opted for 'a', three percent (1 student) chose sentence 'c' and another 3% did not answer.

In the case of this exchange, 'b' is the correct answer, because the use of the indefinite article in the second sentence of the target exchange means that we cannot be certain if the person has a gun or not. If she had one, the correct grammar would be: "She went to look for the gun or something." As for option 'c', the information given in the target exchange is not sufficient to assume that the person in question likes guns or not.

As for the relatively high number of students who chose sentence 'a', one explanation might be that EFL learners often find it difficult to appreciate the fine difference in meaning when the indefinite or the definite article is being used.

The last question was as follows:

What can you infer from this statement?

We didn't know if he had passed the exam, but then he smiled.

- He didn't pass the exam, but he didn't care.
- He passed the exam and is happy about it.
- He was happy to see me.

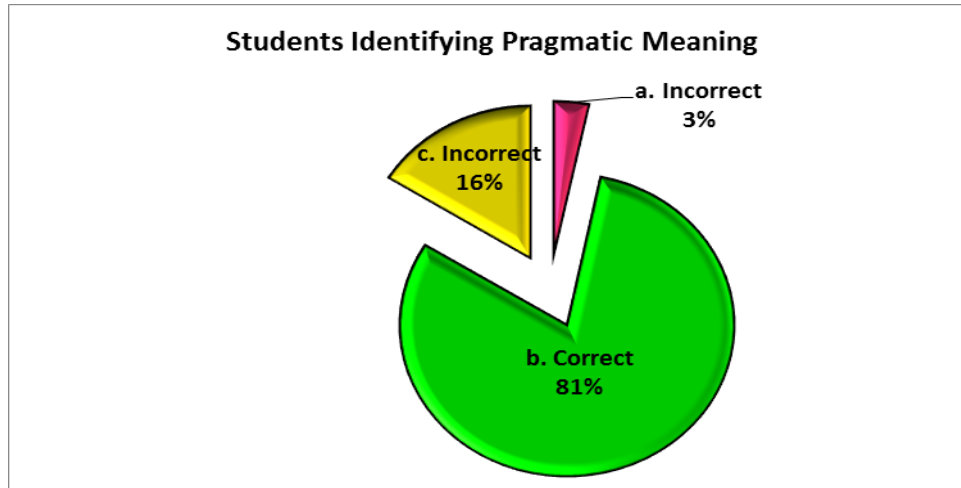


FIG.3. 13: Source: Test before application

As can be seen in the graph, 81% (25 students) chose the correct answer which was sentence 'b'. Five students (16%) selected sentence 'c' and one student (3%) sentence 'a'.

In this situation, sentence 'b' is the correct answer, although it must be said that sentence 'a' could not be completely excluded. The target sentence is an example of how, in the case of pragmatically loaded utterances, all depends on the degree of probability and the interlocutors' effort to observe the general concept of the Cooperative Principle.

The Cooperative Principle implies that one should avoid ambiguity. In the above target sentence this point of having to be clear seems to be flouted, but the hearer interprets the sentence according to what is the most likely meaning.

The most probable reason why the students chose sentence 'b' as the correct answer is that since some pragmatic rules are universal, the students were able to resort to these skills in L1 and successfully transfer it to L2.

### 3.1.3. Pragmatics Workbook Appraisal

The data below are based on an appraisal that the students did in a relatively early phase of the application of the workbook. Twenty-seven participants were present on the day; therefore, the data are based on 27 answer sheets. The pragmatic input came from a video titled "Pragmatic Failure in Intercultural Communication" dealing with cross-cultural misunderstandings and an explanation

as to what topics should be avoided when talking to Anglo-Saxon native speakers of English.

In the first 4 activities, the participants of the present study were exposed to instances where pragmatic failure interrupted communication between native and nonnative speakers of English. The students were asked to recognize the problem in each.

In the first exchange, a nonnative English student asks her teacher to buy a dictionary for her in a very direct and impolite manner.

The results are shown in the graph below:

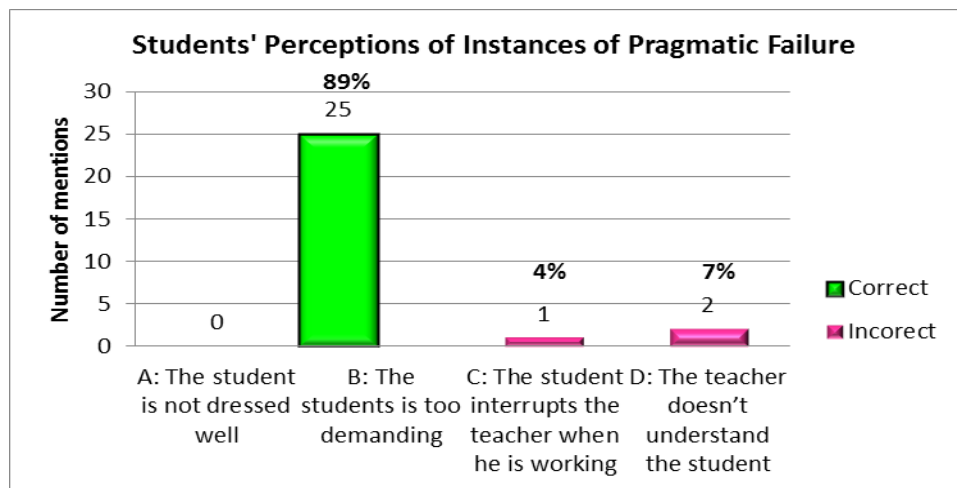


FIG.3. 14: Source: Pragmatics Workbook Appraisal

As can be seen in the graph, 89% (25 students) chose 'b' as the correct answer. Seven percent (2 students) assumed that the failure in communication took place because the teacher did not understand the student (sentence 'd'), and one of those two assumed that the failure was also due to the fact that the student interrupted the teacher (sentence 'c') and, accordingly, marked up two answers.

It seems that it was not very difficult for the students to choose the correct answer. The reason could be twofold. One is that there was an explanation of the situation and a repair as well. Two is that if the students were to answer a similar question based on an incident between two Spanish speakers, they would choose 'b' as well, because in Ecuadorian culture, it would also be considered impolite to approach the teacher in the way it was shown in the video.

This could be perceived as an example of sociolinguistic transfer from the students' first language, a skill that could be employed in L2 instruction.

In the next instance, a nonnative speaker makes the native speaker of English feel “stupid” by answering “of course” when the native speaker asked if the chemist (“pharmacy” in American English) was open on that day.

The outcomes are shown below:

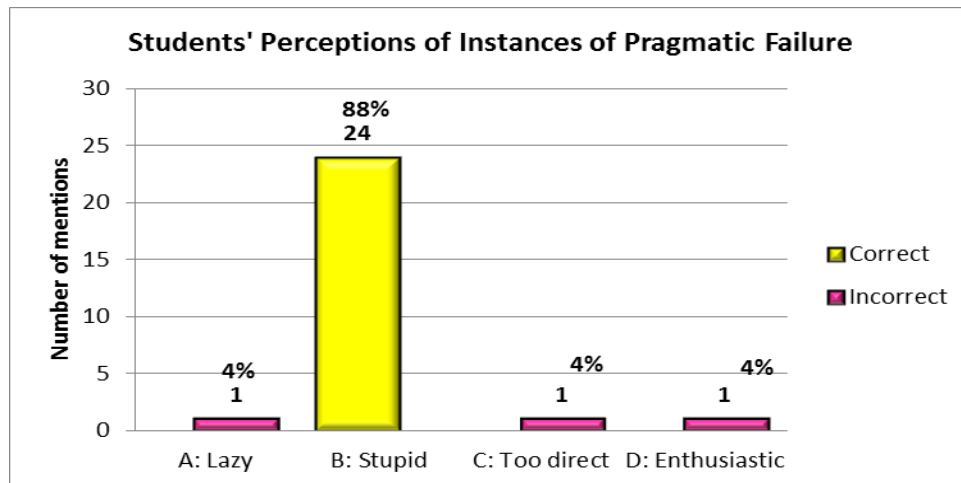


FIG.3. 15: Source: Pragmatics Workbook Appraisal

It can be noted that 88% (24 students) were correct when choosing ‘b’. Four percent (1 student) chose ‘a’; another 4% chose ‘c’; and finally another 4% selected ‘d’. It may be possible that the majority of the students chose the correct answer because of the explanation offered in the video. The fact that in Ecuadorian culture the reply “Of course” might be considered acceptable is immaterial, because in this situation it is the native English speaker’s perception that is important.

In the next instance an Asian guy, who is a nonnative speaker of English is talking to a native speaker of English. The native speaker offers the Asian guy a drink; this guy refuses the drink and feels bad because the native speaker only offers him the drink once. The students were asked to choose, from the options shown in the chart, what the problem was. Of course ‘a’ was the correct answer.

The results are shown below:

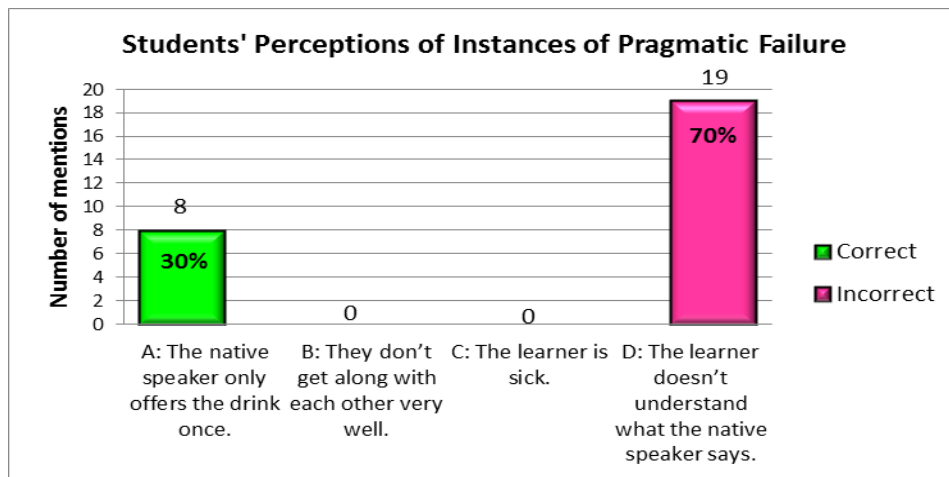


FIG.3. 16: Source: Pragmatics Workbook Appraisal

As can be seen, even though an explanation was given, 70% (19 students) chose 'd' as the correct answer instead of 'a'. Thirty percent (8 students) identified the correct answer ('a').

The answers given to this particular question are quite different from the ones analyzed before where most students got them right. This might be due to the fact that in Ecuadorian culture when being offered something, the guest is free to accept or decline first time round. The host, for his/her part, may or may not offer hospitality more than once. The Asian custom of not accepting for the first time and, therefore, the host usually offering several times is a cultural blind spot for most Ecuadorian speakers of English.

One might say that Ecuadorian learners of English may not find themselves in this situation, but they could still meet Asian interlocutors who are reluctant to accept hospitality first time round. Therefore, it seems that explicit instruction regarding the sociopragmatic aspect of offering and accepting hospitality across cultures might be useful. For example, the video used explains the fact that in English speaking cultures the first answer to an offer of hospitality is taken as the final answer, because the host probably does not want to impose.

In the next instance, a nonnative speaker of English does not understand that the native speaker of English whom she is talking to wants to say goodbye by uttering "any way, nice to meet you."

These are the results for this exchange:

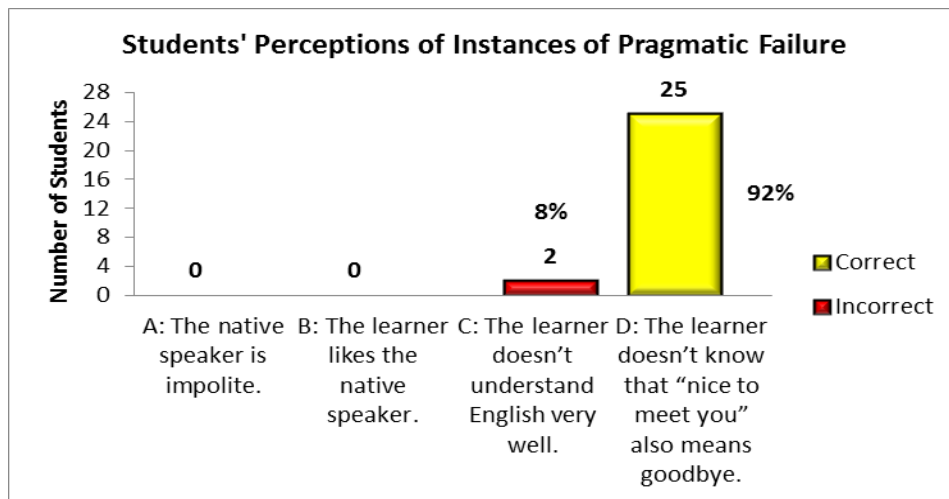


FIG.3. 17: Source: Pragmatics Workbook Appraisal

It can be seen that 92% (25 students) were correct when choosing 'd' as the right answer. Only 8% (2 students) did not select the correct answer and chose 'c' instead.

The reason why most students chose the correct answer might be that the explanation provided in the video was clear and straightforward. In addition, the students could have used transfer from L1 since it is likely that a similar situation might arise in one of their encounters with foreigners and the nonnative speaker's insistence on carrying on with the conversation would be perceived just as awkward in Spanish.

In the next part of the quantitative data, the role plays created and performed by the participants are analyzed. This set of data involved the results provided by 31 students. As mentioned above in the research methodology, the reason for using role plays in this project is that they are a good tool when collecting pragmatic data. In addition, role plays offered the researcher of this study the opportunity to find out how students used the target expressions and pragmatic situations when they were specifically asked to do so (elicited).

These role plays were assigned as homework and later performed in the classroom. They lasted between 3 and 5 minutes each. The instructions were included in the workbook, and the teacher provided extra information to clear any doubts.

The first set of role plays required the students to employ the ten common expressions shown to them in a video. For the second set of role plays, the students

were asked to use the common expressions, the situations in the video about pragmatic failure in intercultural communication, and the common gestures used in American culture – all topics which had been discussed with them before. The third set of role plays was based on the first scene of the sitcom, Two and a Half Men.

The results for the role play grades are summarized in the graph below:

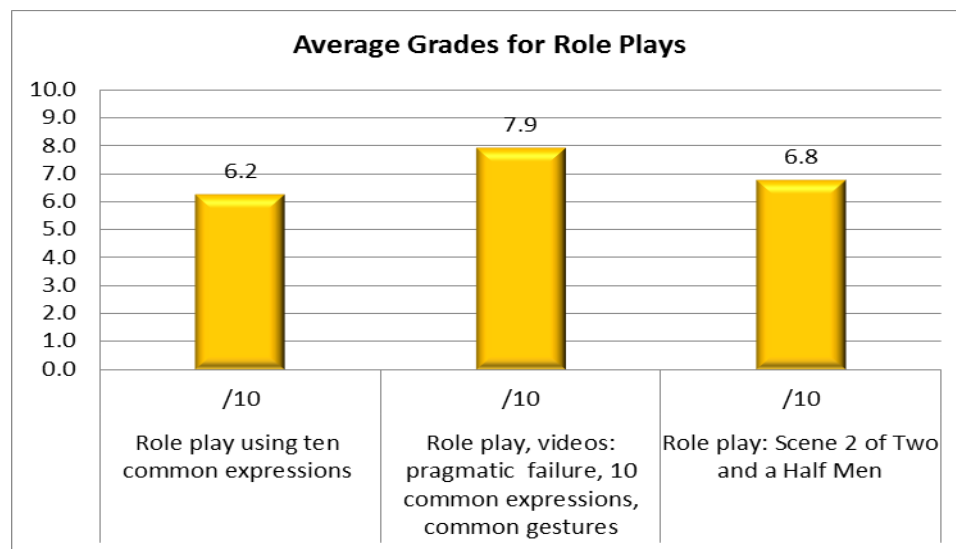


FIG.3. 18: Source Role Plays

As can be seen in the first bar above, the students did manage to use a number of expressions presented to them, but the average grade also suggests that comprehension and active production does not always go hand in hand. As for the second bar, where the students had to use the expressions, pragmatic failure situations, and gestures, it can be seen that the average grade improved. This might suggest that it was more difficult for the students to use the expressions as a single task than it was to act out pragmatic failures and to use gestures. In the third bar, it can be seen that the average grade is lower than the second, but higher than the first. This might be because the students found the expressions in the first scene of the sitcom easier to understand and use than the expressions they were required to use before.



### 3.1.3 Midterm Test

At a later stage during the application of the workbook, students were tested on phrases and expressions as well as short exchanges; the correct interpretation of which would depend on how far the students appreciated the unspoken pragmatic intent. This data set involved 31 students. Although some of the expressions might be treated as set phrases, their pragmatic usefulness lies in the fact that they make speech more idiomatic and therefore closer to native speaker standards.

The first sentence involved a fixed phrase. The students had to answer *yes* or *no*.

“At 8 o’clock sharp” means around 8.

The results are summarized in the figure below:

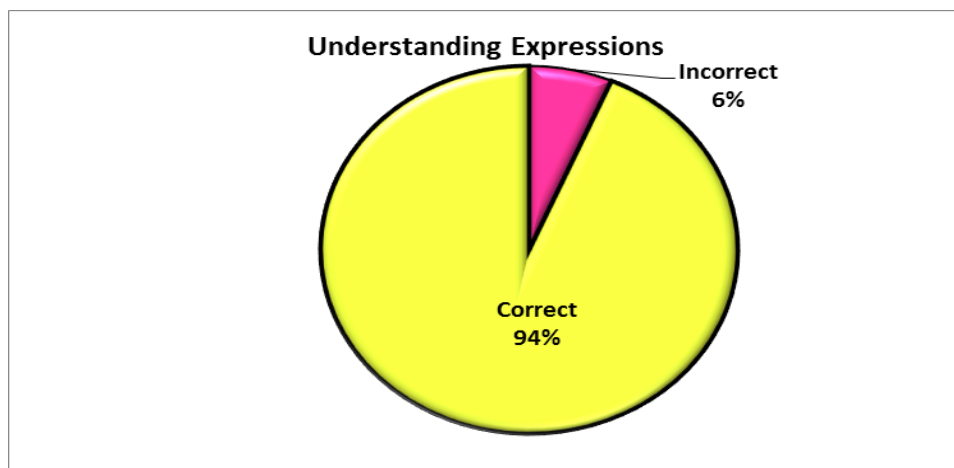


FIG.3. 19: Source: Midterm Test

As can be seen, 94% (29 students) were correct when choosing “No”, because “sharp” implies at an exact hour rather than around a certain time. Six percent (Two students) answered “Yes”, which was not correct.

It seems that the great majority of the students benefitted from the explanation given in the video and the extended clarification provided by the teacher. It is rather interesting that even though the explanations provided by the students may not be grammatically perfect, they carry the pragmatic meaning successfully. The variety in the explanations is striking: “at eight, no more than that”, “at that time exactly, don’t be late”, or “at 8 o’clock, no less minutes, no more”.

In the next instance, the students were asked to decide if the phrase “Get out”, in a particular situation, meant a command for someone to leave. The correct answer was “No”. The context presented to the students was the following:

A: I’m pregnant.

B: Get out!

In this case, B wants A to get out.

The results are expressed in the graph below:

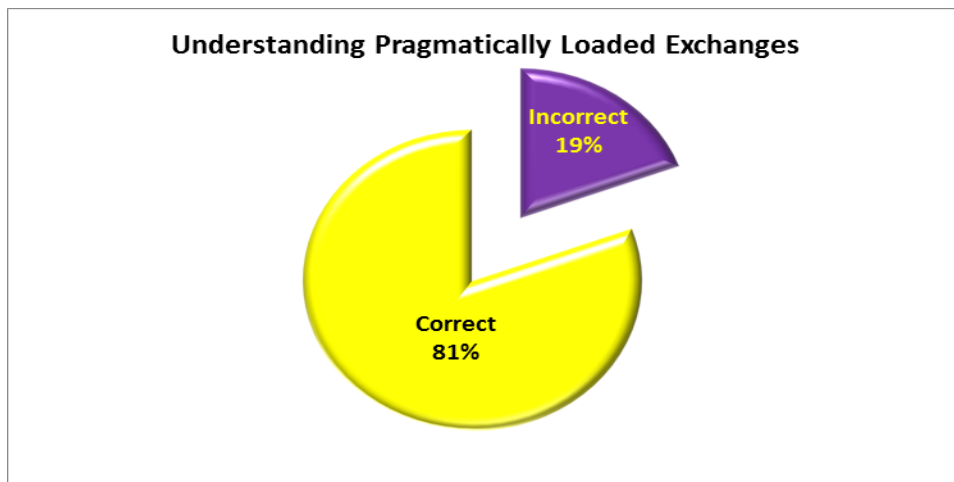


FIG.3. 20: Source: Midterm Test

It can be noted that 81% (25 students) were correct when they answered “No”. Nineteen percent (6 students) answered “Yes”, which was not correct.

In this case, the interpretation suggested as the answer (B wants A to get out) is not correct, because “get out” is an idiom that can have two different meanings (beyond the literal meaning, as in “he got out his wallet”). “Get out” usually means a strong command to leave. The other meaning can be considered highly idiomatic; it means that the person who utters it as a reaction to the other’s speaker’s statement cannot believe what is being said and is even perhaps pleasantly surprised by it.

Although instruction was given to the students about the second idiomatic meaning of this phrase, there was a higher percentage of wrong answers than for the rest of the idioms.

The reason might be that this phrase has two idiomatic meanings and, therefore, the students required a higher degree of pragmatic ability to identify the second one, which is not used too often, and especially not in “course book English”.

In the next instance, students were asked to decide whether or not the expression “to get the ball rolling” meant to finish doing something. They had to answer *yes* or *no*.

The results are shown in the graph below:

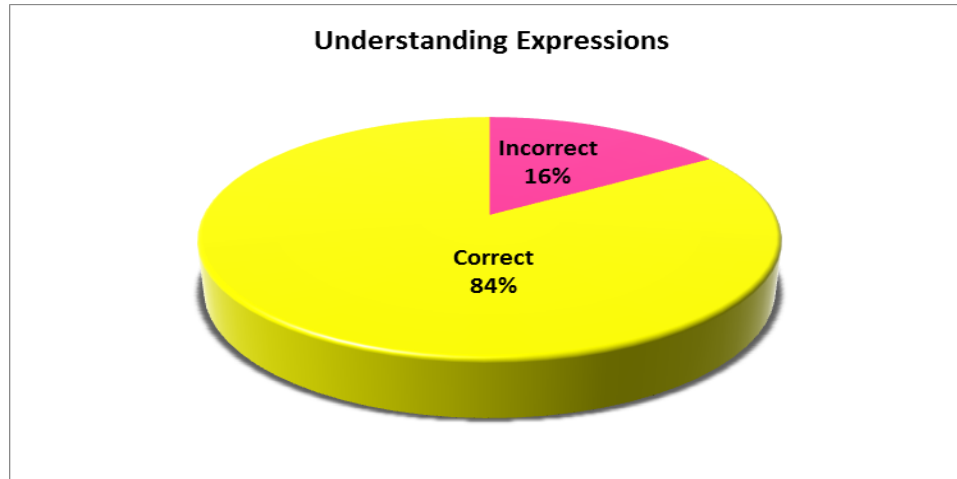


FIG.3. 21: Source: Midterm Test

As can be seen, 84% (26 students) were correct when choosing “No” as the right answer and also added correct explanations to justify their choices. Sixteen percent (5 students) chose “Yes”, which was incorrect.

As can be noted, once again there was a relatively high number of wrong answers and there is no apparent explanation for this discrepancy.

### 3.2. Qualitative Data

#### 3.2.1. Instances of Clarification in Native-Nonnative Encounters, the sitcom, and Nonnative-Nonnative Encounters

As mentioned in the literature review, clarification is a short dialog that takes place within another, larger dialog. This dialog occurs when there is some kind of a misunderstanding. The following situations, where clarification dialogs take place, constitute the production efforts of the participants of the present study in their encounter with a native speaker of English as well as in the free discussions with their group mates, and the input they received through the videos as well as used during the application of the above mentioned material, namely, the workbook.

Further below, instances of clarification will be analyzed as well as situations where clarification could have been used but was not. In the situations where



clarification was employed, the possible reasons that led to asking for and offering clarification will be examined: anomaly, ambiguity, situations where an explanation was required, or situations where the listener requested information on the meaning of a certain term. Walton offers the following description of a complete clarification cycle:

1. Speech act by proponent
2. Something is unclear to respondent about proponent's speech act
3. Respondent asks proponent to clarify the speech act
4. Proponent offers clarification
5. Respondent judges if clarification was successful or not

At this stage, if the clarification offered by the proponent is successful, the clarification dialog might end there, and the "main" dialog could continue. However, if the clarification is not successful, the cycle might be repeated starting from number 3, namely, respondent asks proponent to clarify the speech act again.

For the purposes of the present analysis, the examples given below have been chosen to illustrate the speech act of clarification.

### 3.2.2. Native-nonnative clarification dialogs

The next couple of examples have been taken from an encounter between a native speaker instructor and seven students of the treatment group. From the point of view of socio-pragmatics, the social distance between the participants can be described as follows: the native speaker is older than the students and has the status of an instructor. He is the "fountain of wisdom" as regards English.

The following excerpt is the first in the line of clarification dialogs. The native speaker instructor sets the scene by introducing himself and letting the students know what he does at the university. Before the first clarification dialog takes place, the native speaker asks the students about what they would like to do for a living.

*A: How many of you want to be teachers ... some day?*

*S 21: I'm going to be a translator*

*Because I don't like too much be a teacher*

*A: OK*

*You're gonna be a translator*

*So ... now you want to be an oral translator or translate texts or whatever...?*



S 21: *Whatever...*

A: *Whatever...OK...Whatever pays, right?*

*That's important.*

In the discussion with the native speaker, there is a clear example of asking for and offering clarification. The native speaker wanted to find out what the students were going to do after finishing university. His initial question was *How many of you want to be teachers ... some day?* implying that he thought all the students would take up teaching. Student S 21 replied that he wanted to be a translator. The native speaker started talking about this interesting job prospect when suddenly he realized that he might need some clarification as to what type of translation work student S 21 had in mind.

*So that ... that's a great profession, it's ... it's tough, but it's a great profession*

*So ... now you want to be an oral translator or translate texts or whatever...?*

The request for clarification is in the form of a question offering the two interpretations that the proponent of clarification offers to the respondent to choose from. This is a case of ambiguity because the two types of translation work (being an *oral translator* or a *translator of texts*) are different and require different skills.

It is possibly not by chance but part of an experienced instructor's skill that the native speaker refers to the interpreter as an oral translator assuming that phrasing it this way will fit in with the previous knowledge of the student. This might have been unnecessary because the word interpreter exists in the Spanish language in almost the same form (*intérprete*).

The student's reaction is not very helpful because rather than clarifying which type of translation work he would like to do, he leaves the choice to the proponent of the question: "*whatever*." It is important to see that the nonnative speaker student does not take the opportunity to clarify what he would like to do even though he would only need to choose between the two options offered by the native speaker: "oral translator" or "translator of texts". The proponent, who is also running a discussion, quickly decides not to pursue the clarification request because he is also chairing a discussion and would like to offer others an opportunity to describe their choices for the future.

In this instance, therefore, there was a short clarification dialog between the native speaker and student S 21 that was embedded in a lengthy discussion



involving several participants. The embedded dialog is then brought to a closure by the native speaker's swift and humorous final statement:

*Whatever... OK... Whatever pays, right?*

*That's important.*

Some minutes later, there is another clarification dialog in the conversation.

*S 3: Me ... I'd like to teach at the university ... because I think ... boys and girls need to prepare more for the future ... and is very important to learn English ... I think is basic to ... for study abroad, another major or speciality... I don't know*

*A: OK*

*S 3: That thing is very important ...*

*A: So you don't necessarily want to teach English per se...but some other subject in English or you might teach English itself?*

*S 3: You know ... I would like to teach ... subjects*

*A: What other subject interests you?*

*S 3: I don't know ... I am more artistic*

*A: OK*

In this dialog, which is still about the career options of the students sitting with the native speaker, we can hear student S 3 explaining that she would like to teach at university level. Her contribution is full of pauses and hesitations and the utterances she makes lead the native speaker to ask for clarification. This is because it is unclear from student S 3's statement whether she would like to teach English or any other subject at university level. This latter interpretation is possible because she says "*... I think is basic to ... for study abroad, another major or speciality... I don't know ...*" which could mean that she thinks university students should have a good command of English for their special subject matter.

The native speaker in this situation requests clarification. It takes the form of an affirmative statement ending with a question-type rising intonation. During the course of the present research project, the students were made aware of the fact that native speakers often use this seemingly ungrammatical pattern when they ask questions.

It is interesting to note that the nonnative speaker understands the fact that the statement is actually a clarification question because she does clarify her preference of teaching various subjects. So the pattern of what has happened in terms of speech acts may be described as follows:



P (NNS): offering information in response to information-seeking question

R (NS): asking for clarification using an affirmative statement accompanied by question-style intonation

P (NNS): offering clarification

P stands for Proponent, R stands for Respondent. NNS stands for nonnative speaker and NS for native speaker.

Although there is no verbal acknowledgement to signify that the clarification has been successful, it can be assumed that the native speaker had his doubts clarified because if it had not been so, he would have started a new clarification seeking cycle. Another sign that the clarification has been successful is the fact that the dialog is now returning to its normal course with the native speaker asking another information-seeking question: "What other subject interests you?"

This can be treated as a qualifying information-seeking question and although the nonnative speaker cannot specifically mention the subject, she is describing some of her favorite activities such as painting and dancing.

By way of summary, one might say that this was a successful clarification dialog; the native speaker felt that there was some uncertainty concerning the nonnative speaker's intentions as a teacher. He pinpointed the possible interpretations and the nonnative speaker was able to offer clarification in a satisfactory manner.

Next is another clarification dialog. This time it happens between the instructor and a student who lived in an English-speaking country for a number of years.

S 16: *I spent a lot of time in the United States so ... I realize about the necessity with the speaking and learning English...from people ... when from Ecuador, Colombia, Bolivia, Peru*

*So there is a lacking ... people trying to survive in another environment...trying to learn new customs ... new ... a new language and there was a really, really ... sad*

A: *So you wanna to take care of people before they go somewhere else or after they get there?*

S 16: *That would be nice...That was ...That would be nice...That's what I want to do*

A: *OK*

In this exchange, student S 16 is still explaining what he would like to do in the future. Based on his experience in the United States, he mentions that he would like to help people. He lived there for fifteen years, so he says he wants to use what





he learned about the state of migrants in the States to help people. What is not clear for his interlocutor, namely, the native speaker, is whether he wants to help migrants before they travel to another country or once they have arrived there. (There could be a third interpretation of what the student wants to do, and this is to help migrants who return to Ecuador). For this reason, the native speaker asks: *“So you wanna... to take care of people before they go somewhere else or after they get there?”* This clarification question is actually asked as an affirmative sentence accompanied by question intonation.

For some reason, even though the student is given two options, he does not make use of either of them, but rather answers: *“That would be nice” “That’s what I want to do”*. One can only assume that he was referring to the last choice he was given which was to help migrants after they get to a foreign country, but it is very difficult to know precisely what he was referring to. It is also possible that the student simply agreed with the general idea of helping migrants lacking appropriate language skills and suffering from a fair amount of culture shock.

Finally, the native speaker utters *“OK”*. This might be an indication that the native speaker realizes that the student did not understand his question completely, but is reluctant to probe any further. Therefore, this clarification dialog can be considered as semi-successful.

Let us take another example. In the exchange below, the native speaker wants to confirm the name of one of the students. Student S 16, who is sitting furthest from the native speaker instructor, answers uttering his name.

A: *I’m sorry, what’s your name?*

S 16: *Gio*

A: *Joe*

S 16: *Gio*

A: *John*

S 16: *Gio...Gio*

A: *Gio...Giovanni...OK*

In this particular example, one can see how native and nonnative speakers are forced to ask and offer clarification. In encounters like this, decoding the interlocutors’ names can be taxing because the first names and the way they are spelled are often unfamiliar to the parties involved.



At the outset, this looks like an ordinary information-seeking exchange where the native speaker acknowledges the information offered by uttering the student's name as he has heard it: "Joe". How did Gio become Joe? Walton refers to Schank and Abelson's theory on artificial intelligence and cognitive science studies which offers an explanation as to how the human mind processes new information. He explains that "According to this theory, we understand new things that we partly fail to understand by relating them to old things we already understand. Thus when there is a failure of understanding, it is because there is a gap in something that generally makes sense to us, but there is one particular respect or point in which it fails to make sense"(qtd. in Walton 178-179).

In the native speaker's mind, the name "Joe" constitutes a familiar item, while "Gio" probably sounds unusual. Add on the fact that nonnative speakers often use the English versions of their names (for example, George for Jorge), and one can see the information gap opening up. Next it is the nonnative speaker's turn to offer clarification by saying his name again. On the surface, it looks like a pronunciation issue, but obviously having one's name pronounced incorrectly affects the self in a somewhat negative or, at least, uncomfortable way. And things are only getting worse. The native speaker's next approximation effort is offering another similar first name "John". One can only assume that this is the result of the same mental process referred to above. It is possibly only because of the social difference between the parties that student S 16 does nothing else but repeat his name for the third time; and then, for the fourth time.

It is only at this stage that the native speaker pronounces Gio's name correctly. Resembling the think-aloud technique, he links the name he has just uttered to the full version of an Italian first name he is familiar with. For the record, "Giovanni" spells his name this way: Giovanni.

In sum, it can be said that, student S 16 probably feels frustrated when someone mispronounces his name. Since he spent a number of years in the United States, he might have experienced similar situations in the past, and is perhaps sensitized to such incidents. His socio-pragmatic strategy under the circumstances is very simple but effective; he says his name four times over.

### 3.2.3. Clarification dialogs in the sitcom



Next are a couple of examples of clarification dialogs identified in the sitcom used as part of the application of the workbook. Obviously, the students who participated in this research project were exposed to these examples. The nature of this series makes almost all instances of clarification dialogs either funny, or sarcastic.

The following short clarification dialog takes place when Alan and his former wife, Judith, are bringing Jake's stuff into Charlie's house. This is a situation where an explanation is needed by the proponent. However, it is the proponent's father who clarifies the situation. As Walton states, sometimes the person who clarifies a situation is a third party, for example a lawyer in legal disputes where something is not clear to one of the parties.

*Jake: Uncle Charlie hasn't met Porky yet.*

*Charlie: I don't suppose that's a Rubenesque 19 year old girl?*

*Alan: Porky's his pet guinea pig.*

*Charlie: You're bringing vermin into my house?*

This is the first instance of clarification found in the sitcom. In this particular example, Jake, Charlie's nephew, mentions that his uncle "*has not met Porky yet*". This is unclear to Charlie; that is why he uses sarcasm and utters: "*I don't suppose that's a Rubenesque 19 year old girl?*" Even though he knows the answer is "no", he uses this mockery to find out who or what Porky is. Once he learns that "Porky" is a guinea pig, he expresses his uneasiness by asking "*You're bringing vermin into my house?*"

It can be said that the clarification dialog in this example is successful because when Alan hears Charlie's question he replies "Porky is his pet guinea pig". Even though Charlie does not like the idea of having rodents in his house, at this point it is clear to him what Porky is.

The next instance of clarification involves a girl with whom Charlie had a short romance. As mentioned above, this lady refuses to accept that her relationship with Charlie is over. She insists on sneaking into Charlie's house at any time without invitation. In this example, Alan is the one who sees her first, unaware that this time she comes to the house because Charlie has asked her to do so.

*Alan: Charlie? That strange lady from down the beach is back.*

*Charlie: Oh yea, she's here to baby-sit.*

*Alan: Come again?*



*Charlie: I thought we'd go out and have a drink.*

*Alan: You want me to leave my son with the whack job who's been stalking you since your one night stand?*

*Charlie: Hey, you try and find a baby-sitter on a Friday night.*

Charlie and Alan are talking to each other when, suddenly, Alan tells Charlie that “*the strange lady...is back*”. Charlie informs his brother that she is there to babysit, to which Alan asks “*Come again?*” Here, an explanation-type clarification is needed because Alan does not understand why a babysitter is required. Charlie explains that he assumed they were going out for a drink. The puzzlement on Alan's behalf originates from the fact that he feels this particular “strange” lady cannot be trusted to be left alone with his son.

This instance of clarification dialog is somewhat different from the ones examined so far, because the respondent does understand the words uttered by the proponent, but the respondent needs to know why Charlie thinks that the lady could be a trustworthy babysitter. The proponent tries to clarify this to the respondent by reminding him that they were supposed to go out that night and that it is very difficult to find a babysitter on a Friday night.

The clarification dialog is successful because the respondent understands what the proponent wanted to say, even though the respondent does not agree with the proponent's idea at all.

One might assume that the proponent in this exchange is Alan who is offering the first piece of information about the strange lady in the house. However, the clarification dialog itself only starts by Charlie offering information on why the lady is there. This utterance is the first step in the clarification dialog because Alan needs to find out why this unlikely person should be in the house.

Obviously, there are more instances of clarification dialog in the sitcom; however, the rest of the examples are very similar to the ones analyzed above; therefore, this sample will suffice to reveal the type of clarification dialogs the students were exposed to.

#### 3.2.4. Nonnative-nonnative clarification dialogs

After the examples of clarification dialogs involving a native-nonnative encounter and native-native conversations (sitcom), let us look at further examples

which are taken from the final free discussions which the participants had after the treatment. The following instances of clarification, therefore, are between nonnative speakers of English.

In most cases clarification dialogs appear embedded in a larger, more general conversation. In Walton's terminology:

It is highly typical of clarification that it takes place as an interval in some other type of dialogue where an attempt is made to solve some problem that has occurred in the other dialogue, specifically a problem where one party in the dialogue fails to understand some previous contribution of the other party that is necessary for the dialogue to continue in a successful manner. (195)

In the first case, the students are talking about music; one of them mentions that being a musician is hard. This is probably the reason why they suddenly start to talk about a certain music festival which leads to a short clarification dialog. Therefore, the main dialog is music and the short, clarification dialog is about the selling of alcohol at this festival. Some of the students explain that they were at the music festival, while others in the group were not able to make it. It needs to be stated at the outset that one of the main themes of the music festival was that young people can enjoy themselves without drinking alcohol.

S 16: *I was just about to say that ... the purpose of this is ... people can be happy, have...fun ... without alcohol*

S 19: *Yes that's the purpose, but...*

S 16: *A lot of drunk people was, you know, lying before*

S 19: *Yes, the thing is that ... despite of this no alcohol there, no alcohol servation...people like to drink alcohol a lot*

S 32: *I heard that they were selling a lot of alcohol there*

S 19: *Selling?*

S 16: *No...*

S 32: *There were*

S 19: *I didn't see*

S 32: *They said the people that were selling the water, they were selling alcohol*

Two of the students who went to the festival mention that they saw a lot of people drinking and even lying about being drunk. Student S 32 states that he heard that alcohol was being sold there even though it was not supposed to happen: "I



*heard that they were selling a lot of alcohol there.*" Student S 19, who was present, needs clarification because he himself did not see alcohol being sold and therefore could have assumed that people had brought alcohol with them or came already inebriated. Thereby the one-word clarification question: "*Selling?*"

According to the Gricean maxim of quantity mentioned in the literature review of the present research project a person should provide only the amount of information necessary for his or her interlocutor to understand the message. This is a clear example of this maxim put into practice by student S 19. He uses only the part which needs to be clarified for him and he uses question intonation. Student S 32 at this point reiterates what he heard "*there were*" to which students S 19 says, "*I didn't see*", this being a retrospective explanation for his original, clarification-seeking question. Student S 32 feels the need to offer further information regarding what he heard which is that, "*They said the people that were selling the water, they were selling alcohol*". There is no further clarification requested or offered, so it can only be assumed that what he meant was that people were pretending to be selling water while they were actually selling alcoholic drinks.

As a conclusion, it can be stated that the clarification here was semi-successful because there is no closure, or anything like that, uttered by the questioner. As can be noted, one of the closure words used by the native speaker was "OK". The absence of any closing speech act leaves the dialog in the air and creates a permanent sense of uneasiness in the listener. Missing routines can be especially disturbing for native speakers who expect certain clichés, or some reasonable, logical, summative statement indicating the end of a dialog that has taken place.

In the next group discussion, two male students are talking to a female student about their favorite TV programs.

S 28: *OK, Mireya, what do you most like to watch on TV?*

S 1: *I like soap operas ... My favourite soap operas is the Bandidas ... Bandidas ... is in Telemazonas... It's very nice*

S 25: *What's that? Bandidas?*

S 28: *Bandidas?*

S 25: *Have you ever heard that? ...*

S 28: *Never heard that...*

S 25: *It's pretty boring. What about the sports?*



S 1: *I don't like the sports ... because it's very boring for me*

The female student, S 1 says that she likes soap operas and that her favorite is the one called *Las Bandidas* which she introduces as **the Bandidas**. It is a Venezuelan soap opera series, and the female student even offers the name of the television channel where it can be seen. The two male students, almost in unison, ask for clarification by repeating the title with a slightly mocking intonation. Their reasons for asking for clarification could be that they genuinely do not know this series and they are puzzled by the fact that student S 1 refers to the series as a soap opera although by the sound of its title it could be a western or a thriller. The male students, S 28 and S 25 playfully establish that they have never heard about the series and prefer watching sports any way.

To some extent this is not a genuine request for clarification, and the listener has the feeling that the male students are not even interested in the clarification sought, and it is not by chance that it is not offered, and the female student temporarily withdraws from the conversation.

The conversation that follows is another example of a general dialog going on, in this case concerning unfaithfulness.

S 34: *What do you think about women that are unfaithful... with ... with her husband or boyfriend?*

S 6: *Uhm...*

S 15: *For me it's bad ... because if you ... uhm ... get some partner ... you have... you have ... respect*

S 34: *Respect him*

S 6: *Yes*

S 15: *Respect him or her ...*

S 6: *You have to love him or her ... all your life*

One of the three female students talking asks the other two about unfaithful women. Student S 15 replies that in her opinion partners should mutually respect each other "*For me it's bad ... because if you ... uhm ... get some partner ... you have... you have ... respect...*", but before she could finish, student S 34 interrupts and provides an end to the utterance by saying "*Respect him*". At this point, student S 15 feels the need to clarify that this should be a two-way affair "*Respect **him or her** ...*" On the face of it, all that is happening is providing the correct grammatical forms for personal pronouns. However, it is obvious that there is a gender issue for





student S 15. It is probably not by chance that the third participant in the conversation, student S 6, who so far has only exhibited resonant behavior, identifies with student S 15's approach when she says "*You have to love him or her ... all your life*".

As can be noted, this is a different case of clarification dialog. There is not, actually, a clarifying question asked by the respondent, which is how most clarification dialogs start. Instead, the proponent finishes the respondent's assumed reply, and it is the respondent who feels the need to offer clarification about her true, intended meaning.

The following clarification dialog is from another group of participants.

S 35: *What are you doing?*

S 27: *I'm going to my class ... my English class*

S 9: *Today?*

S 27: *Today... And this weekend?*

The example above is one where an explanation would be needed within the exchange. In this short clarification dialog, student S 27 is asked by student S 35, "What are you doing?" S 27 responds that she is going to her English class, to which student S 9 asks "Today?" Then S 27 simply answers "today..." After that, the clarification dialog is abandoned. Again, an example of the maxim of quantity can be found in this exchange. The respondent is, for some reason, surprised that her classmate is going to an English class on that day, but instead of making use of a long and grammatically well-structured sentence, she makes a one-word question.

It is interesting to see how the proponent gives the respondent a one-word answer as well. Under normal circumstances, namely, in native-native encounters, one would expect the offering of a reason why the proponent is going to an English class on that particular day.

Since the dialog is abandoned, it is very difficult to establish whether that one-word answer was enough for the respondent to clarify her puzzlement. On balance, it can be said that this clarification dialog was probably unsuccessful.

In the next clarification dialog, a definition is needed because one of the respondents does not seem to understand the meaning of an English word.

S 29: *Uhm, in my case I have three types of pets ...because I have a goose ... goose*

S 22: *A what?*



S 29: *A goose... It looks like a duck (Pronounced dook) ...*

S 22: *Duck (corrects his partner's pronunciation)*

In this case, the students are talking about pets. This can be considered as the main topic. Everyone is sharing information about whether they have or like pets. Then a short clarification dialog takes place. Student S 29 informs the rest that he has three pets and that one of them is a goose. Next, student S 22 asks “a what?” to which student S 29 answers “A goose” “It looks like a duck”.

This clarification dialog falls into the category of the situation where a definition of an unfamiliar word is asked for by the respondent and is given by the proponent. Since student S 29 notices that his partner is not familiar with that particular word, he repeats it and compares the animal to a more familiar or more common one, namely, a duck, hoping his partner will understand or realize what a goose is. It is difficult to know whether the clarification offered was successful because the dialog is abandoned.

Another interesting element in this example is that student S 29 mispronounces the word “duck”, and then student S 22 corrects him by providing the accurate pronunciation of the word. Since student S 29 knows that the partner who provided this correction has a better level of English than he, student S 29 just accepts the correction without commenting on it. In a situation where nonnative speakers of the target language are talking to each other, this kind of unsolicited clarification could be said to be normal and acceptable, depending on the level of social distance and familiarity of the people involved. However, in a similar situation involving native speakers only, this kind of clarification would happen between an adult and a child and would be awkward if an adult corrected another adult the same way as student S 22 did with student S 29.

As has been demonstrated by the instances of clarification dialogs in the three scenarios above, namely, native speakers with nonnative speakers, native speakers among themselves, and nonnative speakers talking to other nonnative speakers, the students who participated in this research project are not able to perform clarification questions in an acceptable manner. In addition, in most cases, the students cannot provide the clarification requested by the respondent, especially by the native speaker.

In many situations where a clarification question would have been expected from the students, it did not happen. In the first production stage, where the students



talked to a native speaker, some of the reasons why they did not ask for clarification might be that they did not know how to do it; they felt a little nervous; they were afraid of making mistakes in front of the native speaker and the camera; or they did not understand the literal meaning of some statements uttered by the native speaker. In the second production stage, the students ask for and give clarification in a somewhat different-from-normal or unnatural manner.

Based on these findings, it would be advisable that these students are taught how to perform the speech act of clarification in an explicit manner. As mentioned in the literature review, certain pragmatic skills are sometimes learned through mere exposure, but in most cases, explicit instruction is needed.

Learning how to ask for and give clarification when needed would make the students appear more competent, and would certainly help avoid many confusing situations where the lack of this pragmatic ability would hinder their communication with native speakers. Obviously, the students need to develop their speaking and listening skills alongside their pragmatic skills.

## **Chapter IV**

### **4. Conclusions and Recommendations**

The fact that language researchers in academia are concerned about the status and inclusion of pragmatics in language teaching shows how important it is. Based on the findings of the empirical research carried out with the subjects of the present study, especially the main group (4<sup>th</sup> term students), the main conclusions and recommendations are presented in the following paragraphs.

With the purpose of determining whether an introductory pragmatics booklet could help develop students' pragmatically appropriate language comprehension and production, the following research questions were posed as guides for this exploratory qualitative research: 1) To what degree does the application of an interactive, skills-development workbook improve students' pragmatically appropriate language comprehension? 2) To what degree does the application of an interactive, skills-development workbook improve students' pragmatically appropriate language production?

As regards the first question, it was found that the students did develop, to a certain level, their comprehension of contexts where pragmatically loaded exchanges were presented to them. After some explanation provided by the teacher and discussions carried out in the classroom, the students were able to better comprehend the pragmatic use of language, such as expressions and sarcastic utterances. Moreover, the students were exposed to and understood other "forms" of English as performed by native speakers; for instance, the use of affirmative statements as questions, or not observing the third-person singular form of verbs. These features of colloquial language usage are not frequently explained in English textbooks. This was also found in the study carried out by Burbano, in which the author analyzed the sociopragmatic content of the English textbook most Ecuadorian public high schools were using in 2011. One of Burbano's main conclusions was that the input students were receiving did not help them develop their pragmatic skills as it focused on grammar rather than on naturally spoken English. The results regarding the first research question of the present study suggest that some aspects of English pragmatics might be less complicated to comprehend than others. However, in some cases, the students could have made use of their L1 pragmatics in order to

understand the situations that were presented to them. This might demonstrate Kasper's ideas about the existence of pragmatic universals, and how L2 students use what they already know when trying to comprehend pragmatically loaded exchanges.

With respect to the second research question, the main findings are the following. During the application of the workbook, the students performed in a more than acceptable manner when they were asked to use the expressions and the pragmatically loaded exchanges; however, when they did the free discussion with their partners, almost nobody used any of the target expressions or exchanges. Whether the students would have used this kind of pragmatic language if they had had more time to talk is very difficult to establish.

This demonstrates Kasper and Rose's explanation that a researcher should use authentic discourse as an instrument for investigation carefully, because "...it may take an unreasonable amount of data to obtain sufficient quantities of the pragmatic feature under study..." (83). In addition, this result implies that, since these students had not been taught English pragmatics before this study took place, one semester of instruction might not be enough for them to internalize certain pragmatic rules; therefore, more teaching should be provided.

As for the workbook used in this research project, the following conclusions and recommendations might be worth observing. Apparently, the subjects of this study benefited from the use of videos and sitcoms for pragmatics instruction. The students showed much enthusiasm and willingness to participate. This might be due to the fact that professors do not use audiovisual materials in their instruction very often; consequently, as mentioned by Martinez and Fernandez, using sitcoms and videos might be considered when teaching pragmatics as they offer authentic-like input.

Since it was an introductory pragmatics workbook, it would be a good idea to complement it with other materials referred to in this study, such as discourse completion tests. In addition, the professor might consider using other type of audiovisual material that is better suited to his or her students' needs. Finally, it may be a good idea to include a teachers' guide for the use of this workbook, which would also contain a brief summary of what pragmatics is, its importance, and the most relevant findings in the research that has been carried out on this area of linguistics.



What follows are the more general conclusions and recommendations regarding the main subjects of this study.

When the students had their session with the native speaker, there were instances where they were not able to provide accurate information and clarification. However, when they had to do the group discussions with their partners, many students who did not participate much with the native speaker, showed more enthusiasm and contributed more by asking for and offering information regarding themselves and the topic. Regarding the speech act of clarification, one may conclude that the clarification questions and answers performed by the students were often inappropriate. It can be assumed that they would have behaved differently if they had been talking in Spanish. This suggests that explicit teaching of the speech act of giving and requesting clarification is needed.

As regards the 8<sup>th</sup> term group, which had already taken a course called Basic Pragmatics a year before this study was carried out, here are the main conclusions and recommendations. First, the students still remembered that this area of linguistics has to do with language and culture, and that its study goes beyond the knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation of the target language. Furthermore, as can be seen in the results and analysis chapter, most of them did remember the correct meaning of some of the expressions included in the test.

It is to be noted that there was one question regarding the practical use of pragmatics which only one student out of fourteen answered correctly. This might suggest that more explicit instruction with examples like the one used in the test should be provided to the students. However, it might also imply that, according to Kasper's ideas, there are certain aspects of pragmatics that are resistant to instruction. Perhaps, pragmatics instruction should deal with those aspects that are more straightforward and can instantly improve students' pragmatic awareness and, as a result, their pragmatically appropriate communication style. This result is in line with Kubota's research, carried out in 1995, and House's investigation, performed in 1996. Both these pieces of research found some restrictions in the teaching of pragmatics.

As for the instruments used for collecting data in pragmatics studies, the most effective ones according to Kasper and Rose are discourse completion tests, questionnaires, videos, role plays, and conversation analysis. This fact is important because it gave the researcher a benchmark as to what tools to use in this study. As

mentioned before, videos, role plays, tests, and conversation analysis were used in the present study.

A practical recommendation regarding future research on pragmatics in Ecuador is that linguists and language teachers should consider using discourse completion tests at the beginning of their investigation, since these tests help the researchers elicit the pragmatic element they wish to focus on. After the application, the researcher could use similar discourse completion tests together with a free discussion exercise to find out how much of the input students internalized, and how far it is reflected in their natural production of English.

As for suggestions on teaching methodology, the use of authentic materials in class cannot be overrated for the purposes of providing rich and engaging material in the teaching/learning process. Such sources supply the students with cultural and sociopragmatic information, some of which can be made part of their productive skills, while others will remain in the receptive sphere, but will still contribute to a better understanding of the target language and its speakers.

Even though the students participating in the English Degree Course at the University of Cuenca do have to take a course called “Basic Pragmatics”, teachers of the “Conversation” course should include some type of explicit pragmatics instruction as part of the syllabus. Most of the materials only focus on grammar and vocabulary and not on how language is used in authentic communication, which sometimes includes subconscious breaking of grammar rules. In addition, English teachers themselves might benefit from instruction regarding pragmatics and its place in language teaching, so that they can then apply their knowledge in their classes.

By way of summary, some sociopragmatic aspects are worthy of study in the EFL context described earlier. Beyond the speech act of clarification, these might be greetings and leave-takings, apologizing and complaining. These features of discourse would need to be incorporated into the teaching/learning process of English as a foreign language with a specific sociolinguistic content. Students taught by such an approach might be able to function better in authentic, communicatively challenging situations.





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## Appendices

Appendix 1: Kasper's Table of Data-Based Research on Pragmatic Instruction.

study	teaching goal	proficiency	languages	research goal	design	assessment/ procedure/ instrument
<u>House &amp; Kasper</u> 1981	discourse markers & strategies	advanced	L1 German FL English	explicit vs implicit	pre-test/ post-test control group L2 baseline	roleplay
<u>Wildner-Bassett</u> 1984, 1986	pragmatic routines	intermediate	L1 German FL English	eclectic vs suggestopedia	pre-test/ post-test control group	roleplay
<u>Billmyer</u> 1990	compliment	high intermediate	L1 Japanese SL English	+/- instruction	pre-test/ post-test control group L2 baseline	elicited conversation
<u>Olshain &amp; Cohen</u> 1990	apology	advanced	L1 Hebrew FL English	teachability	pre-test/ post-test L2 baseline	discourse completion question.
<u>Wildner-Bassett</u> 1994	pragmatic routines & strategies	beginning	L1 English SL German	teachability to beginning FL students	pre-test/ post-test	questionnaires roleplay
<u>Bouton</u> 1994	implicature	advanced	L1 mixed SL English	+/- instruction	pre-test/ post-test control group	multiple choice question
<u>Kubota</u> 1995	implicature	intermediate	L1 Japanese FL English	deductive vs inductive vs zero	pre-test/ post-test/ delayed post-test control group	multiple choice & sentence combining question
<u>House</u> 1996	pragmatic fluency	advanced	L1 German FL English	explicit vs implicit	pre-test/ post-test control group	roleplay
<u>Morrow</u> 1996	complaint & refusal	intermediate	L1 mixed SL English	teachability/ explicit	pre-test/ post-test/ delayed	roleplay holistic ratings



					post-test L2 baseline	
<u>Tateyama et al. 1997</u>	pragmatic routines	beginning	L1 English FL Japanese	explicit vs implicit	pre-test/ post-test control group	multi- method

Appendix 2: Questionnaire given to the 8<sup>th</sup> Term

Please answer the following questions:  
Circle the letter of your response.

1. According to your experience, what is the area of language pragmatics is concerned about.
  - A. Language and numbers
  - B. Language and culture
  - C. Language and mathematics
  - D. Language and grammar
2. What does *take it easy* also mean?
  - A. Come back soon!
  - B. I'm going to miss you.
  - C. Don't do it.
  - D. Good bye!
3. If somebody walks into a room and says *it's hot in here*, which speech act is this?
  - A. Perlocutionary act
  - B. Illocutionary act
  - C. Locutionary act
  - D. None of the above
4. To *flunk* a course means to:
  - A. Fail
  - B. Pass
  - C. Postpone
  - D. Like
5. Somebody commenting on a movie: *Well the sound effects were awesome*. This means:
  - A. He liked the movie.



- B. He didn't like the movie.
  - C. He wants to talk about sound effects.
6. To do something *from scratch* means:
- A. From the middle
  - B. From the beginning
  - C. From the end
  - D. None of the above
7. What does *get a grip* mean?
- A. Leave me alone!
  - B. Get control of your emotions...
  - C. Get a girlfriend or boyfriend...
8. Somebody has to make a decision. He says, *I don't know. I'll sleep on it*. What does this mean?
- A. He doesn't want to do it.
  - B. He wants to sleep and forget about it.
  - C. He needs some time to think about it.





### Appendix 3: Demographic Questionnaire

The following information will be used by the person who is doing the research only. Please fill in this questionnaire with a true answer. Names are not necessary.

1. What is your age?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What is your gender?

Male \_\_\_\_\_

Female \_\_\_\_\_

3. Have you lived in an English speaking country?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

4. (if you answered NO in question 3, please go to question 6) Which country?  
how many years?

Country \_\_\_\_\_ Years

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Did you receive any kind of formal education in English while you were in that country?

A. Elementary school \_\_\_\_\_

B. High school \_\_\_\_\_

C. College / university \_\_\_\_\_

D. English courses \_\_\_\_\_

E. Other \_\_\_\_\_ (which one?)

\_\_\_\_\_

5.1. If yes, how many years did you study English in that institution?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Does anybody in your family (family you live with) have a good level of English?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

6.1. If yes, who? \_\_\_\_\_

7. What specialization did you study in high school? (write it in Spanish)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



8. Besides the years you have studied at the University of Cuenca, have you taken any English courses in Ecuador?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

8.1. If yes, for how long?

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Do you think English is difficult to learn?

\_\_\_\_\_

10. According to your experience, which is the most difficult skill to develop?

A. Writing \_\_\_\_\_

B. Reading \_\_\_\_\_

C. Listening \_\_\_\_\_

D. Speaking \_\_\_\_\_

11. Do you think that learning English from grammar books is enough for you to get communicative competence?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

12. How often do you watch a movie, series, or the like in English?

A. Once a week \_\_\_\_\_

B. Twice a week \_\_\_\_\_

C. Three times a week \_\_\_\_\_

D. Other (please specify)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



#### Appendix 4: Transcript of Session with Native Speaker

Session between the Students and a Native Speaker of English (Andrew)

A= Andrew

A: This is the Concelt Office... OK, so as ... as I explained this is the Concelt Office...The last three letters are English Language Training...And I work with the team of three other ...I can say seasoned Faculty here in the Language Department. Particularly in the English Language Department and we ... do training for ... public high school English teachers...Usually high school, some elementary schools ... teachers come as well...And we usually have anywhere from one to three workshops a week were we ... just do different methodology update that methodology. We've done a lot with task-based activities in the past year and I came in at the very end of a research project of language teaching...English language teaching in the high schools here and we did some...Beyond the research we did some recommendations and found out that, you know, speaking and listening activities were what was really lacking ... in the materials...So we created supplementary materials for thatSo... Looking forward,how many of you want to be teachers ... some day?Any of you?Most of you?How about yourself?

S 21: I'm going to be a translator because I don't like too much be a teacher. I don't have ... I don't have too much patience

A: OK...You're gonna be a translator...You need to be patient being a translator and that's a very specific field of the English language...It's an interesting field, I mean you become very knowledgeable I guesswith so many different things to ... to translate and understand in both languages so that ... that's a great profession, it's ... it's tough, but it's a great profession...So ... now you want to be an oral translator or translate texts or whatever...?

S 21: Whatever...

A: Whatever...OK...Whatever pays, right? That's important..So ...Ah.. Teachers ...High school, elementary school, university,What do you want to do?Talk to me. ...Anybody...

S 3: Me ... I'd like to teach at the university ... because I think ... boys and girls need to prepare more for the future ... and is very important to learn English ... I think is basic to ... for study abroad, another major or speciality... I don't know

A: Ok

S 3: That thing is very important ...

A: So you don't necessarily want to teach English per se... But some other subject in English... or you might teach English itself?

S 3: You know ... I would like to teach ... subjects

A: What other subject interests you?



S 3: I don't know ... I am more artistic

A: OK

S 3: And ... I like to paint ...and I like dance ... I don't know

A: OK.

S 3: ... this kind of stuff

A: Cool. Anybody else?

S 16: I spent a lot of time in the United States so ... I realize about the necessity with the speaking and learning English from people ... when from Ecuador, Colombia, Bolivia, Peru...So there is a lacking ... People trying to survive in another environment

Trying to learn new customs ... new ... a new language and there was a really, really ... sad

A: So you wanna... to take care of people before they go somewhere else or after they get there?

S 16: That would be nice...That was ...That would be nice...That's what I want to do

A: OK

S 16: Many times ... was sad...People like me ... like him ...like her ... they really struggle...Trying to survive in another place ... in another country ...And that's ... that's ... sad

A: OK

S 16: That's what I wanted to do

A: OK. It's fair enough...Prepare them for change, language-wise and mainly culture-wise.

S 16: I want to teach at university, too

A:OK. Great. What do you all want to do?

S 23: Me?

A: Yeah

S 23: I'd like to teacher ... in elementary school... school because i like childrens ... many

A: OK

S 23: Because when i ... when i teaching in the school ... the children is very ... very ... how do you say? ... "inquietos"



S 16: They are really hyper

A: They are very active ... That's a nice way of saying it

S 23: I like ... play with them! ... I very patient ...and i like the children

A: OK...Great.

S 24: I ... I would like to teach children or teenagers

A: OK

S 24: Because I have patience and I love ... I love child

A: How much patience you gonna have...? (Laughter) Lots ... you were saying...Do you have patience for the administration? Do you have patience for parents, too?Or just the students?

S 24: For parents and students

A: You need it all...You know...I think I said...I taught at .....I taught at ..... also And, you know class preparation, grading ... that's a big ...But there is also the administrative side...The paperwork and all that...And that's a very real part of being able to teach and teach well as well...So ... it's hard...So be ready, OK?  
Two more ladies ...

S 8: Because a teacher can use games with the children. It's an interesting thing. But I need ... to be so patient. And I don't like to work with teenagers. I think it's so hard and I prefer children

A: You can use games with children and adults. I love games

S 8: Yes, when ... when you teach the colour, animals. You can use sounds and pictures, many things

A: OK. Do you like children, also? OK. Prefer children

S 15: I prefer children ...because I like the energy they have...Also I would like to teach mathematics.

A: OK.

S 15: I like ...too

A: OK... you like math too? Great, great combination, language and ... and math...You know...I love all ages...Once I'm mentally ready to do something...I like teaching at university level...because it ... it's ... going from high school to university level university level...The students are more mature in their actions...That can be good, that can be bad...Not as active, not as willing to try things ...Like a girl was



saying...But I ... I think structurally...You can accomplish more and your expectations can be set at a certain level...And they need to achieve it...They're used to achieving...You know I love all that...So that's a great um ...It's fun...I love teaching...I guess I found my passion twenty years into my professional career...As far as teaching...And that's a thing. I love it. I don't have a problem changing and I...It's ... it's a great thing, you know...I started it to...Just to make money, to pay the bills and feed my family...But it turned into a real...passion of mine...So ... so be open...Be open to these things, you...Translating That can open into a world of things...The other job I was talking about ... working in an Embassy and things like...I mean translators ... you can do anything with that. All sorts of... of areas and cultural issues and teaching issues...And other subjects  
You know be ... be open, you know...That's coming from an ... an older ...white-haired...man, you know...You have fun with life...You know what ...And I can go back  
I'm sorry, what's your name

S 16: Gio

A: Joe

S 16: Gio

A: John

S 16: Gio ...Gio

A: Gio...Giovanni...OK...You know ... working culturally...Preparing people ... or working with them to help them adjust to things...You know, that's a passion of mine as well. I can come here...I don't care if I live...I don't care about living in the city, in the country, in the United States, in Ecuador. I'm gonna enjoy where I live wherever I am, you know. I love living here in Cuenca. I loved living in ...Guaranda. I love living ...Somebody told me tomorrow I have to go back to the United States to live fine, let's go Somebody told me you're gonna stay here the next fifty years great, that's fine

OK..You know, love life, love what you do...Do it with passion, OK? And like I said That's why I wanna go for a master's degree... I don't wanna...I want to be the best I can be wherever I am...Tomorrow maybe they tell me would be a great field to get back into it..OK, let's go, I'll do it...I don't care...So to be open,be flexible...This what I am ... saying for you as ... as young ... professionals you early in this...You are in this particular major right now...Don't feel like you are confined to that OK? Open up and enjoy life whatever ... whatever that phrase...When I came to Ecuador...Our saying was I was young, and dumb and unattached, OK? I didn't have a girlfriend at the time, nothing...Dumb, I didn't really know anything...I had a college degree, big deal...That ... that doesn't really matter...Job experience came and I was blessed to have a lot of great jobs and meet ... worked with great people over the years...And use ... use the resource of other people. The people, the three ladies I work with here...fantastic ladies...I learnt more about English teaching in these last...This last year here from those three ladies and then put it in practice in my classes and teaching also...So just ... just fantastic and ... and hopefully they get some things from me as well but, you know, work with people...It's not a competition...So ... so



understand that...Go forward. You can work with others...Talk to me. What do you think about the changes in education policy here in Ecuador?I am sure you are aware of perceptions...When you came in...And now two years into your major...Some things have started to change and evolve...What do you think of these changes? Good, bad?...Wait and see? What ... what do you feel? What do you think?

S 16: I think it's like a... period ... because it's like ... long time we have to wait for the results

A: OK

S 16: I mean...It's gonna take a real ... a real time...So eventually, we'll see if it's good or it's not good

A: You feel the results will be favorable or unfavorable?

S 16: I hope ... favorable

A: I didn't ask you to hope ... Do you think ... Which do you think it will be? Based on...

OK...What are the reasons for it? Knowing the reasons...What's the current situation and what do they wanna achieve...OK. Look at it in that perspective. Don't just sayOh, I hate it. I hate change, I love change! You know...But is ... is this correct change?

Was it properly devised? Or do you think it's going to fail or do you think it will be successful What do you think?

S 16: I think that is ... constant change So we have just to get accustomed to that

A: OK...So whatever it is, we've got to live with it

S 16: Yeah, yeah ...Any way we have to...We have to deal ... manage

A: Any opinion one way or the other...Yes, it's a good thing...Yes, we're progressing May not be perfect...Or ... this is really not a good idea  
Come on, he's not gonna post this on Facebook or anything like that.

S 8: I think any change need a good organization so...

A: So do you think it's well organized? The change process?

S 8: No, I mean ....organization.. but good organization...So It will be successful

A: OK

S 8: But ...yes they need organization

A: organized...This side here...





S 3: I think ... now we have more methodology ... and...Because before we have all education...I don't know was a little ... dynamic ... dynamic...And now are ... is ... more open ... I don't know...

A: Started specifically...in English education as a Second Language pursuit...Or the whole educational process?

S 3: The whole education process

A: OK.

S 3: Yes, and I think it's very good because ... We have more chance ... chance ...for ... to know more things and ... know ... invest ... doing more things for our education...

A: What do you think ...What do you think the best aspect of this whole change process is so far? Somebody over here...

S 21: I think it would be the way to teach the teachers ... for example...Now the student can give her ... her opinion of and the teacher has to listen.

A:OK

S 21: For example, before they can't do that...The students can't ... give their opinion.  
The professor just talk and they had to learn.

A: But the teacher knows more than the student...

S 21: But not always

A: OK (Laughter) OK. And I ... Different way of...Let's just say even...Different way of the learning process...Yeah, that there is...Yeah, the teacher is, hopefully the most knowledgeable...But you need that interaction, I agree that's a very positive change process that's going on another one ...

S 15: Maybe ...more practice

A: OK...You just mentioned goes a long way...But how many of you when you were in high school...Were not in a Bachillerato General...General thing...You had to pick "sociales" or "química" or something....Did you all have to select pretty much or not ...  
... Or was it general? I saw somebody nodding their head..yea you had to select or...

S 3: In my case yes ... because ... uhuh

S 16: Yes



A: OK...To me that's one of the greatest changes...When I taught high school in 2006 and 2007...To see the students as 14 or 15 year old students had to choose...Do I wanna go Sociales ? Or Science ? Or Chemistry ? Or Math ? That's a lot of pressure

And you ... you ... you don't get perhaps the well-rounded picture...You know, you're an English teacher but you love Arts...OK...Would you have the chance...You don't necessarily study dance and art in high school to a great degree but, you know to be exposed to different things and I really like the ... the general requirements. Now the general teaching you get exposed to a lot of things. Now when you're at university...Now you're 18...Do you still know what you want to do? No, not necessarily

But at least you had a good exposure to the different areas ... the different academic areas...So I think it is a very positive change...What are some negative changes or negative parts of the changes? Negative, or very difficult parts even ...

S 16: It could be um ... like a competition between students ... could be

A: OK

S 16: Because a student wants to be more than the other way ... in ...I don't know ...it's OK...More than...I don't know ... it's OK...Negative Way

A: Is that a change or it has always been that way?

S 16: I don't know how to explain that but If somebody wants to go back to .. to ... old time...Where ... for example, rich people has ... had more opportunities ... than ... than the poor

A: OK

S 16: Now we are trying to put balance...Education and ... and ...Everybody wants to get to grab the opportunity, Right?

A: OK. So it's interesting...So, what's the actual change then? So you're saying before, it was what? The wealthier you were, the more opportunity you had?

S 16: Yeah, Of course...

A: OK

S 16: But now it's like a...Everybody has the same opportunity right?...It doesn't matter if you have money or if you don't have...

A: That's the mentality!

S 16: Yeah, of course...And you try to ... to go forward ... you don't have to despise any opportunity...Like I said before it's like a Competition

A: Is competition good?



S 16: Could be good...

A: OK. Anybody else? Some of the difficult aspects of the change... That's a good one... thanks... Because that's a whole... You go back to socio-economic impact and influences... That's a huge ... It's not just academics... So it's great to hear stuff. Anybody else? What are some Difficult aspects? (pause) As one works with high school English teachers and they made them take the TOEFL test last year It was ... mayhem OK...

It was panic city for these teachers. And ... and... You know, they have an opportunity to take it again this year and part of our training here as expert teachers has been you know helping them along in understanding the TOEFL exam and understanding where they are at as well, so where it goes from here... I think some of the ... the... As we call it in English Kneejerk reactions OK.... Really... really fast reactions without necessarily thinking through them... What's the impact?... What's the purpose of this?

Why are they why are they putting this pressure on To ... on English teachers And on all the other teachers as well... Sure each different academic area has their own changes... That are not real real fun... but you know that could be part of it you know, the uncertainty of changes is probably... and the lack of organization... as you were saying... You know... And the necessary organization stuff. That's probably the bigger picture... Anything else ... in this process? What are you looking forward to or what... Maybe since these changes began. Is this who we're gonna be...?

With all these changes going on ? (pause) Do you like change or do you like things to stay the same?

S 23: Change sometimes is sometimes ... is very good, but you are ... you... you can... you think... you think... in ... things positive because the change is sometimes very bad, sometimes very good, it depend the situation of the people who you work...

A: So do you see the whole change process seems as being ... unknown as far as the change goes? It will be good change or not so good change?

S 23: I don't know

A: (laughs) So you're uncertain... So you're kinda like yea...

S 23: I like the change because i think in education... the change ... should be ... according to the time... but he have reason about the ...

A: Uhum

S 23: Before the students, ... we have more choice to job ... to working after... after the grade at the high school, but today every student ... every student ... every student need to go to the university...



## Appendix 5: Transcript of Free Discussions among Students

### Free Discussions among Students GROUP 1

- S 19: ... musicians, because, you know, being a musician is very hard
- S 20: I read that article in the newspaper that day but I couldn't go to... to the ... to Mega??
- S 16: I was just about to say that ... the purpose of this is ... people can be happy, have fun ... without alcohol
- S 19: Yes that's the purpose, but...
- S 16: A lot of drunk people was, you know, lying before
- S 19: Yes, the thing is that ... despite of this no alcohol there, no alcohol servation... People like to drink alcohol a lot
- S 32: I heard that they were selling a lot of alcohol there
- S 19: Selling?
- S 16: No...
- S 32: There were
- S 19: I didn't see
- S 32: They said the people that were selling the water, they were selling alcohol
- S 19: Ah, yeah...
- S 20: But somewhere I... I
- S 32: So, Gio, did you celebrate father's day?
- S 16: Yeah, of course, I spent the, the whole day with my son ...I went to a restaurant, you know we, people, soup, yeah, I had a ...uhm, sea soup... That was delicious... Even though it's not that expensive...
- S 32: What kind of a restaurant you say it was?
- S 16: There is a ... on... There is one on Huayna Capac Avenue, they call ... restaurant
- S 19: Oh, yeah, I know
- S 19: Yes, it's a good restaurant, yeah, yeah...
- S 16: It was delicious
- S 19: But, I don't like seafood
- S 20: No, why, I love seafood
- S 19: No, for me it's no, it's strange
- S 32: Are you allergic or something...
- S 19: No, I think that is ... due to my father, because he hate seafood, too
- S 32: Oh, he just hates seafood, that's all
- S 19: Yeah, I think it's genetic
- S 32: OK
- S 20: And did you spend time with your father too?
- S 19: Yeah, with my father no, with my whole family we had a barbecue, my father and my uncles and like that ... Let's talk about last weekend. What did you do last weekend, because I went to the Fiesta the Musica...
- S 32: How was that?
- S 19: Good, everything was excellent there ...The rock and roll was nice, the reggae music, everything was good...
- S 32: I celebrated my birthday last weekend
- S 20: Birthday? Really?
- Happy birthday!!! (all talk together)



S 32: We went ... to a small property we have in Llacao, we had some guinea pig there with potatoes and, and...

S 19: Alright...

S16: I **hate** guinea pig, I can't, can't stand it, I can't even see it..

S 19: Really? Why?

S 16: I don't like ..., (as) simple as that, I can't hold it...

S20: I like it, guinea pig ... For example,... my grandma every weekend prepared a guinea pig for some time ...I, I go to Llacao too, because my grandfather, grandparents live there ... But it's a great ..., I think it's a great place... It's like a...

S32: Very peaceful

S 19: But where were you born? Were you born here In Cuenca?

S 16: Yeah, of course... (laughter)

Really? (general consternation)

### **Free Discussions among Students GROUP 6**

S 28: OK, Mireya, what do you most like to watch on TV?

S 1: I like soap operas ... My favourite soap operas is the Bandidas ... Bandidas ... is in Telemazonas... It's very nice

S 25: What's that? Bandidas?

S28: Bandidas?

S 25: Have you ever heard that? ...

S 28: Never heard that...

S 25: It's pretty boring. What about the sports?

S 1: I don't like the sports ... because it's very boring for me

S 25: Boring?

S 1: Yeah

S 28: What about you, Andrea?

S 17: I agree with ??? ... I also like movies ... I like watch ... romantic movies

S 25: Romantic movies ... that's pretty boring

S17: No

S28: The people are crying all the time...

S17: Not always ... but for example for me... I hardly ever cry with a ... romantic movie... I ... the most of time I cry with movies about deads, with those ... for example...

S 28: What about action movies?

S25: Yes, action movies ...

S28: ...Men fighting, something dies...

S17: Something I like that...

S25: What about sports... You don't like watching any sport?

S 1: Uhhh...Maybe ... I watch sports such as... basketball, soccer ... when I have time

S25: Aahh..

S25: What about you ...? What kind of ... of sports do you like?

S28: I like all sports ... but ... I prefer ... go and see the sports in live ...

S 25: Oh, I got it...

S28: In the ...in the cente ... for example ...in the... in the stadium... in the stadium ... yeah

S 25: What about the fighting? Do you like ...

S 28: Yeah I love that...

S 28: What about you, Andrea?



S17: I like also the soccer ... I would like go to the stadium with my husband, for example ...

S 25: What's your favorite team?

S 17: Uhm ... especially the ???... the team of Ecuador ...??? And also ...

Deportivo Cuenca

S 28: Yeah, that's the best...

S 25: Of course...

S 1: The three, I can more agree with...But I prefer Barcelona ... for me it's perfect

S 28: Barcelona? No...

S 25: I hate Barcelona... What is that... It's better keep away from her

S 1: Come on

S 28: All the, Barcelonistas are in the jail ... I think so

S 25: Yeah, yeah ... Everybody does ... monkeys, they are the monkeys

S 1: What do you do in the free time?

S 25: My free time? ... I listen ... I would like to listen music ... even I...I ... I do a lot of sports, practice soccer ... I love the soccer ...uhm ... my homeworks ...

S 28: Aah ... Your... your favourite music is rock ... isn't it?

S 28: No ... No?

S 25: It's ... I like ...all of kind of music, actually ... yeah... all of them ... yeah

S 28: I like all ... but I think that reggeton are ... are the worse music

S 25: OK, so I gotta go... Take it easy...

S 28: I'm sorry...

S 25: Bye guys

S 1: Bye

S 17: Bye guys

Bye

### Free Discussions among Students GROUP 9

S 10: Do you have pets?

S 22: Yeah, actually I have one cat and I feed another cat which just go around my ... neighbor

S 10: Yeah?

S 22: Yeah ...What about you? Do you have any pets?

S 10: Yeah, actually, I got two cats

S 22: Yeah?

S 10: and a dog ... but I prefer cats

S 22: Oh, it's very nice... I love cats

S 5: Do you have a dog?

S 10: Yea a dog...Called... Sack

S 5: Oh...

S 22: Zack?

S 10: It's ... it's his name

S 29: The dog ... the dog is yours or is it ...?

S 10: It's mine and also the cats ...

S 29: Because you have ... a ... a sister ...

S 10: Yes, but one cat is ...it's... ah hers

S 22: Oh One cat's from your sister

S 5: So you have one cat and one dog ...

S 10: Two cats and one dog

S 5: Yea, but the one cat is...



S 22: Who owns the dog?  
S 10: Maybe my Dad and my Mum, but I just care ... about that...  
S 29: The dog is... is... ah the whole family?  
S 10: Yea  
S 5: I have one ... one dog, her name is Debbie  
S 22: Oh yeah, it's a tiny one, right? Yeah... I've seen the...Yes ...I like it  
S 5: She has 4 years ... but...  
S 22: Your dogs looks... your dog looks like a rock  
S 5: Thank you  
(Laughter)  
S 22: I mean ... those you know ... I mean when they're laying down they flattened, they look like rocks... I used to have one, too  
S 5: OK  
S 29: Uhm, in my case I have three types of pets ...because I have a goose ...  
goose  
S 22: A what? A goose...  
S 29: It looks like a duck (Pronounced dook) ...  
S 22: Duck (corrects his partner's pronunciation)  
S 29: Yeah... two hamsters  
S 22: Yeah...But wait, goose bites ...they bite ... they are mean  
S 29: Two hamsters ... and two turtles  
S 5: Turtles?  
S 10: Turtles?  
S 10: What are their names?  
S 29: They don't ... don't have names  
S 10: Why...  
S 5: Number one ... number two  
(Laughter)  
S 10: twenty one, twenty two...  
S 29: But...  
S 22: We have one and two  
S 29: It's incredible because I have to ... to feeding ... feed them ... and ch ...  
change their water...  
S 5: So you really love animals ...  
S 29: uhm Yes, but I ... I don't have enough time to take care of them ... all of them  
... but I always ... I'm  
S 22: You manage to take care of them ...  
S 10: What kind of food do you ... do you give the turtles?  
S 29: The ducks eats pop corn, maybe is ah...  
S 10: Pop corn ...?  
S 29: Pop corn pero...  
S 10: With a little...  
S 29: Little pieces ... little pieces ...  
S 10: And also lettuce?  
S 29: Yeah, it's like a...  
S 10: What kind of vegetable?  
S 29: I don't know ... potatoes ...in  
S 10: Potatoes...  
S 29: Potatoes in ... in pieces  
S 5: So you cut potatoes in give them potatoes





S 29: In the case of the turtles ... they eat...  
S 22: Do you have that ... that thing that looks like a...  
S 29: ...fish, fish...I ... bought ... I buy fish... I buy fish  
....  
S 5: The fish food ...  
...  
S 10: With different colors?  
S 5: Yes  
S 22: Actually ... have you ever thought about like ...  
S 5: So, I have to go guys  
S 10: OK  
S 22: OK You go  
S 5: Thank you  
S 22: See you...  
(Laughter)



## Appendix 6: Test before Application

Please answer the following questions. No names needed.

1. Circle the correct answers.

1.1. **Ana's sister bought three houses.**

In the previous statement, do you assume that:

- a. Ana has one sister.
- b. Ana has more than one sister.
- c. Ana and her sister are rich.

1.2. **My father stopped smoking.**

In this sentence, what do you think the situation is:

- a. My father was smoking a cigarette and suddenly he stopped.
- b. My father used to be a smoker, but he quit.
- c. My father is sick because of smoking.

1.3. X: **Why did she go back to the house?**

Y: **She went to look for a gun or something.**

In this short dialog, do you think that:

- a. She has a gun.
- b. She may have a gun.
- c. She likes guns.

2. What can you infer from this statement? Please circle your answer.

2.1. **We didn't know if he had passed the exam, but then he smiled.**

- a. He didn't pass the exam, but he didn't care.
- b. He passed the exam and is happy about it.
- c. He was happy to see me.

3. Do you think these sentences are written in Standard English? If not, please change them to Standard English.

a. I ain't seen him for a long time.

---

b. She ain't here.

---

c. Swim for 2 hours?

---

d. Want to go see a movie?



e. Like it?

f. Long time no see.

g. You went to the game by yourself?

h. Got any cash?

i. I'm not goin' anywhere.

j. I don't see nobody.



Appendix 7: Midterm

1. Write OK or correct the mistakes.

A. At 8 o'clock sharp means around 8.

\_\_\_\_\_

B. I'm sick and tired to do homework.

\_\_\_\_\_

C. "Nice to meet you" could also mean hello.

\_\_\_\_\_

D. A: I'm pregnant. B: Get out! In this case, B wants A to get out.

\_\_\_\_\_

—

E. To get the ball rolling means to finish something.

\_\_\_\_\_

F. In English speaking cultures, you should not ask how much somebody paid for something. \_\_\_\_\_

G. "I haven't seen you in ages..." means in a short period of time...

\_\_\_\_\_

H. Sleep on it means to sleep on the floor.

\_\_\_\_\_



Appendix 8: Table of Research Instruments

Timeline / Sequence	Data Set	Function	Instrument	Type of data gathered	Notes
March / 2013	Test given to 8 <sup>th</sup> term students who had already done pragmatics at Level 6	To make a “Diagnostic snapshot” to gauge knowledge about theory and practical use of pragmatics + retention of pragmatic items (expressions)	Questionnaire	Quantitative	This is the diagnostic group, not the treatment group.
March /2013	Demographic questionnaire administered to 31 students of the main group	To obtain appropriate personal data related to language learning; to gather data for a basic needs analysis; to gauge if one of the treatment tools could / could not work	Questionnaire	Quantitative data	-Basic needs refers to the 4 skills, speaking specifically -Can sitcoms work? -some remarks on English learning background
March /2013	Guest Speaker Event	To create the conditions for authentic (although guided) communicative activity with the participation of a native speaker of English (instructor) and nonnative speakers of English (students) <b>Initial Oral production</b>	Group discussion lead by native speaker-teacher	Qualitative data	Analyzed from the point of view of clarification
April / 2013	Test before application of workbook	To assess pragmatic comprehension skills	Questionnaire	Quantitative / qualitative data	-pragmatic situations -standard nonstandard



		<b>Written Comprehension</b>			
April /2013	Workbook Appraisal	To assess effectiveness of treatment based on the Workbook; to test participants on cross-cultural pragmatic failure and taboo topics in Anglo-Saxon culture	Questionnaire	Quantitative / qualitative data	-early treatment assessment of comprehension
May / 2013	Role play grades (3 sets)	To assess and grade students' guided oral production with the help of a rubric from the point of view of pragmatic appropriacy	Video recordings plus scripts	Quantitative / qualitative data	-instances of clarification to be identified
May / 2013	Mid-term test	To check pragmatic comprehension  <b>Written Comprehension</b>	Test Paper	Quantitative data	-during treatment test
June / 2013	Free group Discussions	To test oral production and pragmatic appropriacy based on unguided semi-authentic (classroom) situations  <b>Oral Production</b>	Video recordings	Qualitative data	-instances of clarification